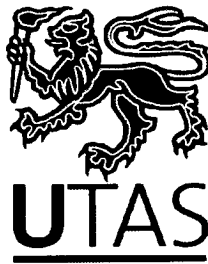


Revealing Scars:

*A study through printmaking of visual art as a
language expressing subliminal experience.*



Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of

Master of Fine Art

from

University of Tasmania (June, 2009)

By

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Bachelor of Arts (2003)

Bachelor of Fine Arts (Hons) (1st class) (2004)

Certification

I, Linden Jane Langdon, declare that this exegesis, submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Master of Fine Arts, in the Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Tasmania, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. The document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Linden Jane Langdon', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Linden Jane Langdon

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Abstract

Revealing scars: *A study through printmaking of visual art as a language expressing subliminal experience*

This research project investigates the possibilities of visual art as an effective means of expressing the lived experience of trauma and subliminal memory without direct reference to any specific event. The projects theoretical and practical research explores the delineation between the intentional expression of repressed emotions and the unintentional presence of suggestive elements within visual works of art. The practical work considers that we construct our understanding of the world through memories and visual (or visualised) cues attached to language.

The motivation for this project stems from the diaries my father wrote during his incarceration as a POW in WWII. Although they form a tangible link to the experiences of being a soldier and prisoner during WWII, it is the emotional aftermath which creates the catalyst for this research. His work as a potter and sculptor inspires the questions that form the boundaries of the research.

Artists who have been inspirational for the studio research during this project include contemporary artists Doris Salcedo and William Kentridge as well as historic artist Otto Dix. The aim of the studio research has been to work through the medium of printmaking to examine the visual expression of the subliminal emotive responses that traumatic events can render in a person's psyche. Mechanisms of plate sequence, site specific arrangement and tonal variation contribute to the development of prints on paper and clay. In the exhibition work, which comprises of over 80 prints of primarily etchings and lithographs, the literal and sense memories are carried through time and place informing and affecting the interpretation and emotional engagement with each encountered environment. An installation utilising audio recording and raw clay is also in the exhibition and these works are supported by bodies of work that relate to the questions posed in the project.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to the many people who contributed time, opinions and assistance to see the completion of my printmaking excursion.

First and foremost thanks to my long suffering family who have set aside many of their needs to be a support in the home and as critical eyes and ears.

Also to my supervisors, Milan Milojevic who assisted directly to harness my wandering mind toward a conclusion with patience and understanding, as well as Leigh Hobba who contributed through commentary and support for the crucial final stages of the research and project development. Thanks also to Michael Schlitz and Karen Lunn who contributed through commentary at various stages of my research.

To my fellow colleagues who have provided endless snippets of suggestion, and moments of relaxation, when it all seemed too much. Plus a big thanks to Jude Maisch for her seemingly endless patience when teaching me ceramics over the period of my masters' research.

This project is dedicated to my father, John Langdon (1921 – 2005)

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Preface

Trauma:- *Psychological*- a startling experience which has a lasting effect on mental life; a shock¹.

Early in 2005 I was sitting next to my father's hospital bed trying to come to terms with what would be the last conversations I would have with my Dad. His milky eyes welled with tears and love and pain as he struggled to say the things that would carry me through the rest of my life without him. He reached out and grasped my hand tightly, awkwardly, and with a rare moment of revelation told me he had not had time to work out which of his carefully guarded sculptures would go to each of us. He was inconsolably stressed that he had not been able to do this and no words from me could really answer the cry.

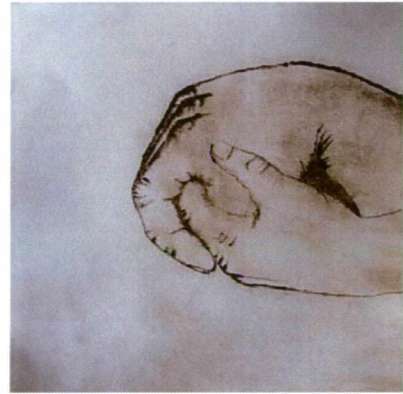


Figure 1: *Last Touch*, drypoint, 25 x 25cm, 2005

My father was a POW for a period of three years in both Italian and German camps. This experience was never discussed in the family home; however the residual effects lived on through his interaction with his personal world. I came to believe that there was an aspect of his life, closely guarded and



Figure 2: Hand size sculptures, John Langdon

intimate, that was his means of expressing the deeply emotional memories he denied existence of. My father formed, carved and kneaded a combination of clay and grog (crushed brick) into sculptures. He then fired them in his wood fired kiln. The tunnelled, minimised and strangely elusive forms gathered in the garden, secreted under trees and placed

¹ The Macquarie Concise Dictionary, 1988

carefully on rocks or logs. The forms don't talk directly about traumatic memory, but they evoke a litany of questions and their tactile surfaces provoke the possibility of sense memory². It is only now that I read his diaries from WWII that I find a possible link between the ceramic forms and the trench (bivvy) he carved in the Libyan Desert to guard him from the onslaught of bullets and protect his few possessions. His work, words and process of creating pottery and sculpture form a means for me to develop my theory of transference of traumatic memory through art process and practice. Reference to my father's work and writing will be intertwined within the paper.

The practical work for my study sets out to determine that:-

- Art can behave as a therapy for a person who has suffered severe emotional distress without acknowledging the act as therapeutic or the specifics of the trauma.
- The art can be a work developed by a third party through research or engagement with accounts of trauma.
- The art may elicit an emotive response from a viewer that defies logic as the image contains intrinsic qualities rather than overt direct comment.

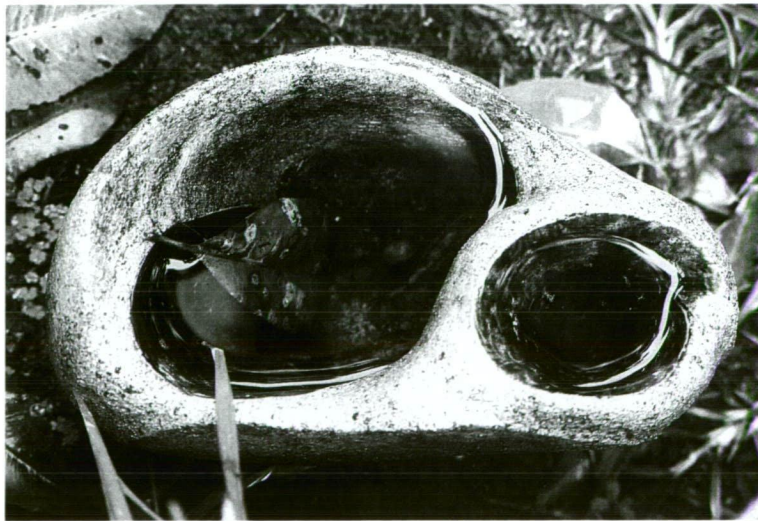


Figure 3: Sculpture, John Langdon, approx 35cm wide

² Sense Memory is an expression I first came across in Jill Bennett's *Dennis Del Favero Fantasm*, (University of New South Wales Press, 2004). The term refers to the ambiguous form of memory that exists as a subliminal account of a memory that has a narrative that may or may not be complete. The body retains a memory through senses rather than narrative.

My interest in the long term and subliminal effects of trauma stems from my own experiences of life and the people who have been entwined within it. Researching the emotional implications of extreme stress or trauma through environmental experience or social interaction began with my 2004 honours paper titled, "Incarceration: the relationship between the physical environment of a prison and suicide explored through printmaking." This project focused on the solitary nature of the moment leading to suicide within the prison environment by exploring the connection between physical confinement and isolation through incarceration, with resulting psychological and emotional withdrawal. The outcome of this project was a set of 8 steel plates that were etched, inked and sealed to form a dull mirrored surface. Each plate had an image of legs in the motion of pacing. The plates lined the walls of the gallery space at floor level to form a small prison cell like space. *Pacing* utilised the sparse walls, confined space and minimal imagery to create a sense of atmosphere that a person experiences in the isolation of a prison cell.

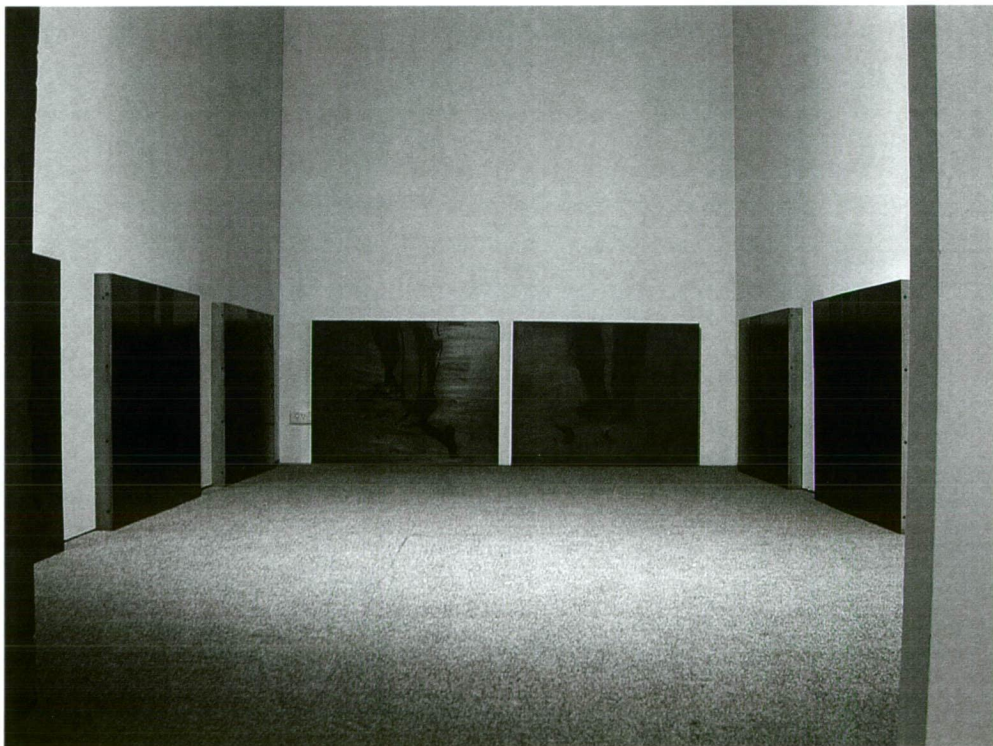


Figure 4: *Pacing*, size variable, steel etched plates, 70 x 90cm, x 8, 2004

The leg images reflect an altering sense of presence as they vary in size, strength of tone and density; sometimes melting into their surroundings, sometimes alienated by it. Each plate offers an individual experience, an

individual's expression of the moment, yet they come together to offer a sense of cohesion within a singular space.



Figure 5: *Pacing* (detail), steel etched plate, 70 x 90cm, 2004



Figure 6: Silk printed with etchings, 200 x 90cm, 2004

Chapter 1

Revealing Scars

My MFA project explores the visual representation of subliminal suppressed emotive experiences in life that become so entwined with the psyche that artwork which bears no relation to events still carry the messages or signifiers of emotional upheaval. The intention of my project is to work in the medium of printmaking to produce images that avoid a literal depiction of any specific traumatic event, yet imbue a sense of subliminal emotive expression that is exposed through transactive engagement with the work. This intention is realised by redefining the literal understanding of memory as a source of ordered narrative that suggests a complete and reliable recollection of a traumatic event. This introduces the presence of sense memory, repression and the inability to process traumatic events in an ordered narrative manner to produce work that reflects an internal disorder.

In my process of printmaking, I have followed several paths of questioning; the literal, the psychological and the physical. The following three questions enabled me to direct my visual investigation.

- 1) Through the process of plate sequence and tonal direction in printmaking, can creative expression expose subliminal emotionally disturbing experiences of life without direct or literal acknowledgment?
- 2) Can you create a space that stimulates a response which draws on a sense memory to empathise with unsolicited emotionally disturbing encounters without reference to any specific event?
- 3) Can the emotionally disturbing experiences of life expressed through the physical body in a subliminal way be exposed through visual art as effectively as the physical scars which record an event?

1.1 The project in context

From the intensely graphic and emotionally charged prints of Otto Dix depicting memories of being a soldier in WW1 to the suggestive and confronting video works of contemporary artist Denis Del Favero, the presence of emotional distress is presented to the viewer as an essential

quality within the work with deliberation. While these works evoke empathy and understanding for events or situations that have borne the heavy weight of trauma to people involved, my interest lies slightly askew to their primary intent.

Jill Bennett ³ introduces terminology and perspectives upon work which may not have been immediately recognised as works relating to emotional upheaval such as the deliberate representative or evocative works previously mentioned. This idea of work which contains within it an expression of the residual influences and effects of trauma is exhilarating as it releases work from the realm of the representative state to a more engaged relationship between the artist, the work and the viewer.

In context, traumatic experience is an expected part of being of flesh and blood and living in a community. Modern day society, with added complexities of communication beyond the confines of a localised community, may add more distressing events into individual lives through a range of media. More social pressure, political pressure and upheaval, wealth inequity and cultural intolerance are all beamed into the lounge rooms of the world than at any other point in history.

The intent of my project, to determine whether visual media is an effective means of expressing the lived experience of trauma and subliminal memory without direct reference to any specific event, is examined through contemporary and historic research of art as an effective visual descriptor. I also introduce the research questions I have used to develop the visual investigation and discuss the significance of the visual expression of subliminal negative experience.

As my aim is to reveal subliminal repressed emotive responses and residual descriptions of traumatic events that remain unexposed, the process of analysing and consciously working to create art that does reveal the disguised is in direct contradiction to the premise. My approach to overcome the deliberate nature of working is to divide my artwork into three distinct projects that respond to three separate questions. These are explained in detail in Chapter 3.

³Jill Bennett, *Empathic Vision, Affect, Trauma and Contemporary Art*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005). Jill Bennett is a lecturer at the University of NSW, curator and author with an interest in trauma and culture, especially within a political framework.

I started by reading my father's diaries. They are a collection of small notebooks and pages he had managed to keep together through his journey as a soldier and then POW in WWII. His beautiful cursive handwriting is cramped as much as possible to conserve the pages that are used on both sides. Dates and



Figure 7: John Langdon, WWII dairies

days merge into a repetitive pattern of discipline, reward and monotony. The flashes of youthful enthusiasm and courage, as my father was a young volunteer among older conscripts (turning 21 on the ship that carried them to Egypt) is rapidly squandered and crushed by boredom and daily functions. But the horror of the battle keeps him content to seek and destroy lice, sew repairs in socks and shirts and invent ways to reuse the tins that arrive in the red cross parcels to keep a mere coating of flesh on his bones in the relative safety of the prison camps in Italy and Germany ⁴.

1.2 Research

Although working with three distinct questions allowed me to divide my work process, the division is more ambiguous and artificial in the research. However, it is useful to separate the questions for the sake of ease of working with the research. The first question, "Through the process of plate sequence and tonal direction in printmaking, can creative expression expose subliminal emotionally disturbing experiences of life without direct or literal acknowledgment", relates directly to the repressed emotions in a spontaneous way without dissecting them in a more considered way.

The initial research centred on philosophy and psychology which introduced concepts of perception and an understanding of the physiology of the human body and sensory capabilities. Following the

⁴ Please refer to Appendix A for some selected entries from the diaries.

trail led to recent published research work and then on to biographical and autobiographical work.

Hume (1711 – 76) was a Scottish philosopher who built strong arguments about human nature. He presented the human mind as being ‘unbounded’ with vast imagination that had no confinement, and then proceeded to contradict such a claim with sound rationale. He wrote:

But though our thought seems to possess this unbounded liberty, we shall find, upon nearer examination, that it is really confined within very narrow limits, and that all this creative power of the mind amounts to no more than the faculty of compounding, transposing, augmenting, or diminishing the materials afforded us by the senses and experience.⁵

If it can be accepted then, through the wisdom of generations of philosophers that perception is a manifestation of sensory and physical experiences, then perception⁶ must be a corner stone of an individual’s experience of trauma.

Works of art are in many ways an act of storytelling. They can expose not only the conscious construction of the narrative within the images, but also the more subtle intonation of words through image. This can appear in choices such as colour and tone, and through the development of the work as the artist adds more and more detail to the flow of the story. Alternatively the development of the work may also disguise the content through degradation of the image and therefore the detail of the ordered narrative.

In the case of work created following a negative emotional experience, the work can reveal a sense narrative ⁷ as opposed to the more literal narrative. This differentiation is essential to understand the subliminal appearance of elements within artwork created by a person who has

⁵ David Hume, 1777 *Enquiries – Section II: Of The Origin Of Ideas* ‘Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding’, in Phil Dowe. *Highlights in Modern Philosophy*, (Hobart: Pyrrho Press, 1998), p156.

⁶ See Appendix D for further discussion of perception

⁷ Here I am suggesting that ‘the’ experience develops into a narrative that is formed through information received and stored through the senses rather than the literal defining of a situation through controlled narrative in understandable linguistics.

suffered emotional turmoil. Narrative constructs our view of the world we see around us. Each time we absorb an environment and the experience of it we are using words to create a familiar and understandable scene that can be recalled, overwritten and altered by adding or losing information. These are the normal processes of our perception, however in the case of severe stress this system can fail, leaving a person unable to communicate what they have seen. This is where sense narrative becomes the primary means of absorbing information. For example a person may be able to recall a sound, smell or sensation but be unable to find words to describe such sensory experiences.

The function of memory is a crucial factor in the repression of clear recollection of an event, but it has many debatable complexities. For the purpose of this study memory may be considered in three ways, the literal or common memory that is created through a narrative construction, the sense memory that encompasses the sensory information and the more ambiguous inherent memory. Jill Bennett talks about sense memory in *Empathic Vision*:

By co-opting the designation “victim” into a narrative of good and evil, we foreclose on the possibility of elaborating a description of traumatic experience that addresses either the moral ambiguities of lived experience or the inherent tension between the experience of sense memory and that of common memory. It is this tension that fundamentally characterises the struggle to represent or register traumatic experience. Thus, the art of sense memory is less an art of pure personal or subjective expression than an enactment of the uneasy relationship between common memory and that which threatens its coherence: a manifestation of the lived experience of an inside and an outside.⁸

This notion of ambiguities, tension and coherence that arise from the human experience of negotiating an event and forming an understandable and knowable memory juxtaposes the physiological responses and forms the unwritten narrative that lives within the sensory system. It is this complexity that goes part of the way to explain the subliminal nature of

⁸ Bennett, *Empathic Vision, Affect, Trauma and Contemporary Art*, p.27.

the sense memory and its emergence as unintentional elements within an artist's work.

Jill Bennett indicates that sense memory, and the art that expresses it, is "a manifestation of the lived experience of an inside and an outside."⁹ The reference to

the inner self and the outer self recurs throughout the research I have done for this project, from the 'innerman' and 'outerman'¹⁰ my father writes about in his final journal entry from WWII to the memoirs, biographies and the autobiographies of people who have experienced traumatic events or who have a relationship with their environment that encompasses a disconnectedness.

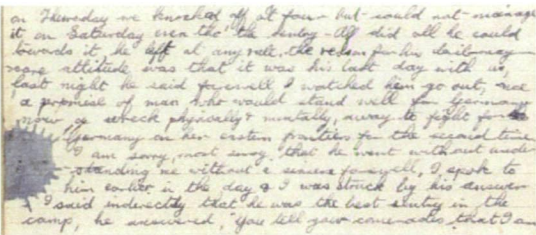


Figure 8: John Langdon, detail of diary writing

The readings are inspirational for the process of the practical work which has been developed with as little conscious consideration as possible with the intention of expressing the internal landscape rather than the known external one. The shift through skin, nerves and cells of the bodily held impressions to be exposed by the mark of the hand is a subtle one that evades description beyond terminology such as 'intuitive expression' as its reference point. The shift is unrecognisable in narrative.

This project endeavours to express the internal landscape as external through the tension between environments encountered through a time span in life carrying the subliminal embodiment of past events that influence the interpretation of the visual information in any situation. The prints engage notions of sanctuary and security, the known and unknown.

In her 1997 article Jean Fisher explores the transactive nature of Everlyn Nicodemus' work as the creation of work releasing the body of pain through the act of making and "...whereby interior sensation is displaced metonymically to the exterior. Thus, the body is projected into a sign that

⁹ Bennett, *Empathic Vision, Affect, Trauma and Contemporary Art*, p.27.

¹⁰ John Langdon, "... if I have not before seen war-weariness I am daily seeing it now, lifeless, pale faces, with a deep look in the eyes certain of the future fate but waiting with a despondent hopelessness for it to arrive, the "innerman" has not been satisfied & is becoming more & more like the "outerman" as hungry war days go by." (personal diary, 1945, see Appendix A for the complete entry).

can be transformed into further signs..."¹¹ Again the exposure of the internal landscape is expressed as the subliminal element within the artwork.

Elaine Scarry discusses the pain of a person experiencing torture and the merging of the external act with the internal responses. This conversion of the visual and physical setting of the torture scene "is internal as well as external since it acts as an image of the impact of pain on human consciousness." Scarry continues,

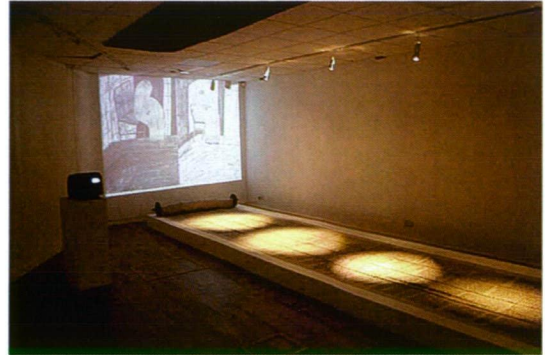


Figure 9: Everlyn Nicodemus, installation view, 2006

"This dissolution of the boundary between inside and outside gives rise to a fourth aspect of the felt experience of physical pain, an almost obscene conflation of private and public." This draws attention to the comprehension aspects of memory and the merging of sense memory with common or narrative memory. Scarry highlights the conflict of experience with the artistic expression and that the "objectifications of pain often concentrate on this combination of isolation and exposure."¹² Perhaps a defining sentence for the continued presence of trauma is from Carol Altmann's "After Port Arthur" when Brigid Cook talks about the daily experience of living with physical injuries received during the Port Arthur massacre of 1996 and firmly entrenched yet illusive recollections. She writes, "It is not a nightmare, but a series of uncomfortable images."¹³

Memory works hand in hand with stimuli. We have all experienced the sudden recollection of events, conversations or simple interaction with an area when we have been exposed to specific stimuli that allow the mind to revisit the memories long lost on unused pathways. Creating a space that may stimulate buried thoughts was the aim for the second question: "Can you create a space that stimulates a response which draws on a sense

¹¹ Jean Fisher, *Everlyn Nicodemus, Between Silence and Laughter*, Third Text edition 40 (Autumn, 1997), p.45.

¹² Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain, The Making and Unmaking of the World*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), p.39.

¹³ Carol Altmann, *After Port Arthur*, (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2006), p.56.

memory to empathise with unsolicited emotionally disturbing encounters without reference to any specific event?"

Again there is no suggestion that there is a specific event that is captured within the space, but the sense of the space may enable a disconnection from the lived reality and the viewer may access subliminal experience.

The expression of creativity manifests in many ways. Stephen Spender writes in his essay *The Making of a Poem*:

The difference between two types of genius is that one type (the Mozartian) is able to plunge the greatest depths of his own experience by the tremendous effort of a moment, the other (the Beethovenian) must dig deeper and deeper into his consciousness, layer by layer. What counts in either case is the vision which sees and pursues and attains the end; the logic of the artistic purpose.¹⁴

The need to create logical, rational and understandable responses to a sense of place is a strong theme for artistic purpose. Many artists seek out specific places to stimulate senses. Drawing on the external stimuli the artist is seduced to follow, tapping into internal responses, memories and whispers with the resulting creativity as a discovery rather than a planned and calculated construction.



Figure 10: Kim Mahood, *Faultline*, relief print and acrylic on canvas, 49cm x 179cm, 2002

Kim Mahood writes about her connection with place in her memoir and the relationship between time, memory and inherent sensory qualities that are imbedded into the psyche through engagement with place. She writes:

There is something unnerving about finding the lake still here. For a long time it has existed only in my imagination. Now its familiar contours hold the traces of a remembered time far more intensely

¹⁴ Steven Spender, *The Making of a Poem* in *Creativity in the Arts*, ed. V. Tomas, (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964), p.37.

than I have ever imagined. And yet its realness simultaneously displaces memory, insists on the passage of time which has separated me from place and memory. ... It is one thing to keep a place alive in the mind, another to go back to that place and hold past and present together.¹⁵

Her response to being in the place that she has been distanced from for a considerable time is to work creatively and she writes:

Using a wash of dark pigment I fill the rectangle, crawling about on hands and knees, spreading the black stain across the canvas. The thoughtless, repetitious action is a relief, respite from thinking. My shadow intercedes between me and the work. A shadow moves too on the lake surface, though when I turn to see what casts it, there is nothing. Only the echo of presence I have glimpsed before, moving through the pages of my journal.¹⁶

Mahood echoes several key points in these paragraphs. The clarity of common memory, overwritten and distorted by time and the lived experience which emerges to confuse comprehension become apparent through example. The subtle seeping of the restrained, repressed inner being bypasses the thought process that creates a comprehensible narrative that the mind seeks to make sense of what we see and feel and hear.

The bodily experience of a traumatic event can register physical scars, but it could also be argued that the body holds scars within its cells that don't appear directly on the surface of the skin. This line of enquiry gave rise to the third question "Can the emotionally disturbing experiences of life expressed through the physical body in a subliminal way be exposed through visual art as effectively as the physical scars which record an event?"

The bodily connection with the earth and inherent carriage of lived experience is accepted as normal in Aboriginal culture, but has been a negotiation for western culture. Jennifer Louride Biddle has extensive knowledge and understanding of the women's art of the Walpiri people

¹⁵ Kim Mahood, *craft for a Dry Lake*, (Milsons Point: Transworld Publishers, 2000), pp.62 – 63.

¹⁶ Mahood, *craft for a Dry Lake*, p.63.

from Central Australia. In her book¹⁷ she carries the reader through an extensive process of integrating the art of the women to the language of the land and ancestral knowledge. The art, a written language which details storytelling and direct response to landscape and cultural history, is traditionally marked upon the upper body. While the skin of the body becomes the site for displaying the artwork the relationship is much deeper than surface. Biddle writes “The body is here a living text that is felt as it is worn; it is a text that transforms with age and the patina of time, like the marks, spaces, contours of country itself, worn and weathered by seasons, storms and now, of course, mining machinery, roads, houses.”¹⁸

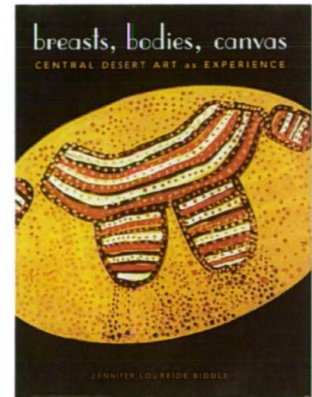


Figure 11: Jennifer Louride Biddle, book cover, 2007

The subtle shift of thinking about the skin as being a surface that separates the body from the landscape, that holds the interior of the body in and forms a barrier between the inner and the outer breaks down with the comprehension that the surface of the land and the surface of the skin are as one. To further clarify the point Biddle writes:

Desert women’s bodies embrace, open out to, and equally take in Ancestral habits, sentiments, sensibilities. The surface of the body, somatically rendered the same as the surface of the country, allows for this bodily exchange between human and Ancestor, by making the two *almost* identical. What lies between the two ‘skin’ – is not so much a border as a certain bridging potentiality. Fat to skin, painting to canvas, hand to mark: an intimacy of conjoining is engendered. A mark – an epiphany of touch – results.¹⁹

Biddle awakens us to the intricacy of the art that reveals the emotive and responsive connections between the cultural and personal history, written on the body and on the canvas which is the same for the artists, and the awareness alerts me to a sense of carrying my ancestors’ sensory experience within my skin, my body, my mind.

¹⁷ Jennifer L. Biddle, *breasts, bodies, canvas, Central desert Art as Experience*, (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2007), p.60.

¹⁸ Biddle, *breasts, bodies, canvas, Central desert Art as Experience* p.60.

¹⁹ Biddle, *breasts, bodies, canvas, Central desert Art as Experience* p.75.

Gilles Deleuze interprets the presence and experience of sensation within the works of Francis Bacon "...at one and the same time I *become* in the sensation and something *happens* through the sensation, one through the other, one in the other" thus creating a transactive engagement between the viewer and the artwork. He continues:

And at the limit, it is the same body which, being both subject and object, gives and receives the sensation. As a spectator, I experience the sensation only by entering the painting, by reaching the unity of the sensing and the sensed. ...sensation is not in the 'free' or disembodied play of light and color (impressions); on the contrary, it is in the body, even the body of an apple. Color is in the body, sensation is in the body, and not in the air. Sensation is what is painted. What is painted on the canvas is the body, not insofar as it is represented as an object, but insofar as it is experienced as sustaining *this* sensation...²⁰

From the day we are conceived, the influences of our physiology begin to affect who we are and the perception of our environment. Sensory coding, the gathering of information about environmental energy, informs the nervous system. The skin responds to sensations of touch through warmth, cold, itchiness, vibration and pain stimulating a range of variable responses. Our bodies learn how to move and the extent of movement we can elicit from our muscles and joints. Taste and smell carry with them responses that range between pleasure and alarm as we negotiate the experiences of living.

Behavioural training in early childhood stimulates the brain and assists emotional development, and secretion of chemicals to produce feelings of pleasure are all important aspects of developing with a balance between the cognitive and physical engagement with our environment. Perception is derived from our life experiences and our individual physiology and "most contemporary psychologists believe that perception depends upon both innate perceptual mechanisms and learning."²¹

²⁰Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: the logic of sensation* (London: Editions de la Difference, Continuum, English translation 2003, 1981), p.35.

²¹ Michael Walker et al. *Psychology 2nd Edition* (Milton: John Wiley & Sons, 1994), p.190.

In the case of creating artwork that reveals and expresses a sense of sensory experience, the artist is working to render into a visible form an invisible element which is perhaps a conflict of senses. For example the artist may express an auditory experience as a visual one. The experiences of the viewer then, are relevant to the experience of viewing. Artwork that depicts an act that instigates horror disguises the sensation. Deleuze writes:

If we could express this as a dilemma, it would be: either I paint the horror and I do not paint the scream, because I make a figuration of the horrible; or else I paint the scream, and I do not paint the horror, I will paint the visible horror less and less, since the scream captures or detects as invisible force.²²

Trauma strikes without warning, or is the result of circumstances experienced but perhaps underestimated. War, for example, with soldiers trained to kill and witness death; to cope with the endless fire of weapons. Yet returned soldiers are one of the most prominent groups of traumatised individuals we have.

1.3 Art and therapy

My initial focus of the project was my father's diaries which he kept for the entire three year period of his imprisonment as a POW. Returned soldiers are one of the groups of people who are readily acknowledged as being traumatised by their experiences. This was not the case in history, when soldiers were told to forget what they had been through and get on with life. This was considered the best way to get over seeing your best friend killed by the enemy or by suicide, starving for long periods, living in conditions which were never safe from attack and so on. It is hardly surprising that returned soldiers, left completely without support, would find assimilating into society with all its expected norms difficult, if not impossible, to do.

Art as a means of expressing atrocity has been questioned extensively on a psychological and philosophical basis. Theodor Adorno's famous quote

²² Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: the logic of sensation*, p.60.

'to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric'²³ in response to the horrendous acts of human degradation suggests that to express through a medium which is largely associated with beauty and rhythm would fail to have the capacity to adequately portray the scene and emotional content. While the quote itself has become a platform of debate, the essence of the words distils in the mind as an artwork in itself. It is suggested that expressing a traumatic experience through the written word or visual form, can help to relieve the pressure of the experience²⁴.

At times of political violence the expectations of daily living with specific boundaries and responses are frequently lost as the conflict disrupts the social organisation of family and community life. Art therapy must therefore be placed within the context of a bigger picture that includes the social order that has become disrupted. If it can be accepted that memory is the means by which a person negotiates the surrounding environment, then memory holds the key to accessing trauma that affects the daily choices an individual makes. Using creative expression a person may be able to externalise the events in a visual form when they are unable to vocalise it. Accessing such a memory, externalising it through creative expression and recalling details that have been diminished by fear is thought to enable a person to begin the healing process and gain courage from the fact that they have survived.

Kalmanowitz, D. & Loyd, B.²⁵ present accounts of cases where art has been introduced to victims of political violence. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder by current definition involves the witnessing or involvement in an event which has a threat to the safety of the person or another person and results in responses of fear, helplessness or horror. This is the measure that identifies individuals as in need of therapy. However, it could be argued that subliminal effects of traumatic experiences become intrinsic to the personality of a person who experiences the horrors, whether they display the necessary identifying behaviours or not.

A loss of identity through the demands of war and the acts of war which can lead to a sense of losing meaning in life can be healed, in part, through

²³ Kalmanowitz, D. & Lloyd, B., *Art Therapy and Political Violence*, (East Sussex: Routledge, 2005), prologue.

²⁴ See Appendix C for further discussion of physiological factors.

²⁵ Kalmanowitz, *Art Therapy and Political Violence*.

the process of making art. This is essentially because creativity connects a person between the material world and the internal one. The physiological urge to survive that can drive the means of coping in the extreme circumstance of war can leave a person in a state of emotional numbness which has a role in survival, but in a stable society becomes a wall of defence. Art can be a means of extending through the emotional barriers constructed for survival and connecting with the present day. "From an art therapeutic perspective 'emotional numbness' could be regarded as 'frozen' creativity. Activities like painting and modelling first 'unfreeze' and then stimulate the survivor's creativity."²⁶

1.4 Summary

In conclusion, our perception of our environment becomes crucial in our understanding of our engagement with it, and in the case of a traumatised person the logical and educated reasoning can become clouded with fear responses or subliminal reactions. *Revealing Scars* draws on the extensive information debated, discussed and studied for generations to solve the riddles of the traumatised mind. The practical work has followed several paths of questioning; the literal, the psychological and the physical.

This chapter has given a brief summary of some of the keystone points that inform the practical work of *Revealing Scars*. Reference to persons and studies in a historical and current context has ensured a strong depth of understanding for the project. In the next chapter I discuss the various approaches that have been taken in a visual context in dealing with the issue of trauma and in relation to the development of *Revealing Scars*.



Figure 12: *Precipice* (detail), 59 x 59cm, 2007

²⁶Kalmanowitz, *Art Therapy and Political Violence*, p.216.

Chapter 2

Trauma and Art: Artists Projects

Artists working with matters of psychological complexity, the physical body and literal representations of traumatic situations have approached the subjects in a wide and varied range of mediums. A thread that weaves between the works is formed by the emotive drive to create the work and therefore to expose to the public eye moments or issues that may otherwise have remained unheard.

2.1 Doris Salcedo

Doris Salcedo engages directly with situations that result in traumatised individuals and politically alienated people. Focusing primarily on her home country of Columbia, she researches deeply into an event, interviewing the people directly affected, then works to produce an installation or sculpture that draws out the hidden perspectives that fall between the cracks of public knowledge.

In a recent work, *Shibboleth*²⁷ Salcedo has created a concrete floor in the Turbine Hall of the Tate Modern in London. The area covered is huge and features a crack that has a small starting point and increases in size as it runs across the floor. The floor's surface is also ruptured by a steel mesh fence. The permanency of the floor is significant as it will remain under the floor of the Turbine Hall, a presence that will always be there as a vague memory of the installation and its message.

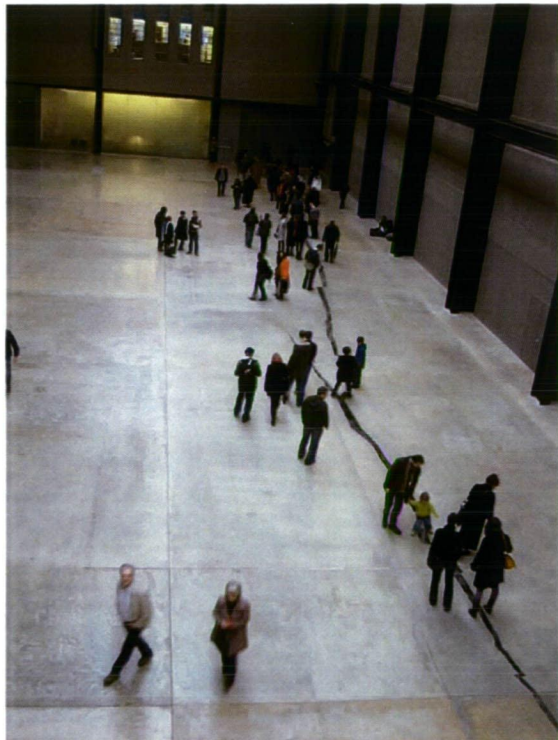


Figure 13: *Shibboleth*, Doris Salcedo, 2007

²⁷ Definition: a word, especially seen as a test, to distinguish someone as belonging to a particular nation, class, profession etc.

The work draws a circle from the roots of colonialism in Britain to the mesh fences that divide the borders between the countries in turmoil in South America. The unwelcome presence of immigration that is addressed with barriers and racial hatred are highlighted by the barriers that the visitor meets when they cross the surface of *Shibboleth*. The visitor needs to observe their step, to be careful and conscious of their movement as the floor slopes downwards from the entry point and the crack creates a



Figure 14: *Shibboleth*, Doris Salcedo, 2007

visual obstacle, "...we all look down and maybe try to encounter the experience of these people..."²⁸ Salcedo works to create art that is from "the perspective of the defeated people not from the perspective of the triumph" thus engaging the visitor with the sensory experience of being in the moment. Describing herself as a secondary witness, Salcedo endeavours to reveal the hidden scars of the human condition in the aftermath of traumatic events and *Shibboleth* is "about people who have been exposed to extreme experience of racial hatred and subjected to inhuman conditions in the first world."²⁹

Salcedo approaches her work with a determination to draw attention to the affliction of suffering upon people following an event. Bennett writes, "there is a fundamental difference between the knife that induces bodily memory of physical pain and an object like the *Orphan's Tunic* that conveys the psychic trauma of grieving or loss."³⁰ The *Orphan's Tunic* consists of a table with a layer of silk over its surface which has been sewed onto the wood with human hair and is in response to interviews with a young girl who had witnessed the death of her parents. Unable to

²⁸ Salcedo, D. <http://www.tate.org.uk/tateshots/episode.jsp?item=12198>.

²⁹ Salcedo, D. <http://www.tate.org.uk/tateshots/episode.jsp?item=12198>.

³⁰ Bennett, *Empathic Vision, Affect, Trauma and Contemporary Art*, p.61.

communicate her loss, the dress the girl wore each day as she met with the artist (made by her mother) became the focus of the resulting piece. A powerful and poignant work of art, *Orphan's Tunic* engages the viewer directly with the emotion of the child's loss. The revelation of the work is not instantaneous for a viewer, it is slowly revealed through disclosure and comprehension.

By avoiding a narrative account, Salcedo is able to:

...present an image that is loaded with experience yet silent, without anecdote, where the viewer, in an act of silent contemplation, may bring his own memory of pain into contact with that of the victim, and it is from this juxtaposition that the meaning of the work arises.³¹



Figure 15: *Shibboleth*, Doris Salcedo, 2007

Silence is an important element in her work. Salcedo recognises the difference between the violence and volume of the event as opposed to the “silent history revealed by individual memory.” ... “Sculpture for me is the giving of a material gift to the being who makes his presence felt in my

³¹ Marguerite Feitlowitz, *Cultural Supplement, Interview with Doris Salcedo*, (<http://www.crimesofwar.org/cultural/doris-print.html>, 2001).

work.”³² This presence can be seen as an expression of the emotional, internal sensory response to trauma. This subliminal tapping is essential in the case of working with people who have suffered such pain. The acts of violence and stress are difficult if not impossible to recall for the sufferer “because disaster literally annihilates people and things, but also because when attempts are made to recall it, there is often a failing of memory, since trauma has the effect of obliterating its own recollection.”³³

Whether Salcedo is working in a large scale that addresses political issues affecting many people or an intimate small scale work that addresses the trauma of one person, she renders the invisible, visible, and in doing so ensures the undeniable presence of the individual suffering as a condition of humanity. Her work draws on the sense memory to create a transactive engagement between the viewer and the artwork. This is emphasised by the space that the work is situated in and the use of sound, which for Salcedo is silence, to gradually reveal the essence of the work. The work may not relate to any specific event, but is in response to the aftermath of one or more events. Doris Salcedo says, “I believe every work of art is political because every work of art is breaking new ground and it’s in a way against the status quo so every work of art and the nature of art is political.”³⁴

2.2 Dennis Del Favero

Dennis Del Favero invites the viewer to experience the emotional fallout from traumatic events, primarily through video installation. Events that are reported by the mass media are thrust into the loungerooms across the world, but only for very brief time, and always with a framework of reporting to the guidelines of the media control. The people who are the focus of the event become a medium through which the reporter can grab the angle of the story that is desired. The people, their flesh and blood, their emotions, may become irrelevant. Del Favero revisits the people and investigates the psychological impact and loss as a result of traumatic events. The temptation is to retell the event, however “Del Favero does

³² Doris Salcedo, <http://www.iniva.org/dare/themes/space/salcedo.html>.

³³ Madeleine Grynsztejn, in *Voice of the Invisible* Tate ETC issue 11, Autumn, 2007, <http://www.tate.org.uk/tateetc/issue11/invisible.htm>.

³⁴ Doris Salcedo, TateShots, <http://www.tate.org.uk/tateshots/episode.jsp?item=12198>, RTF format release date: 18th October 2007.

not relate their stories so much as provide a sense of what it is like to inhabit a world made strange by trauma from which there is no release.”³⁵ Memory is a key factor in dealing with trauma, and the perceptual influences which create a unique memory experience for each person. It is also a fractured memory, maybe pieced together with actual experience, visual and verbal queues from other people and media. Del Favero highlights the continuous process of dealing with trauma as he portrays the effects of trauma as “...inscribed onto a landscape that itself bears the scars of loss, violence and devastation. Inhabitants must traverse this landscape of memory and find ways of existing upon it.”³⁶

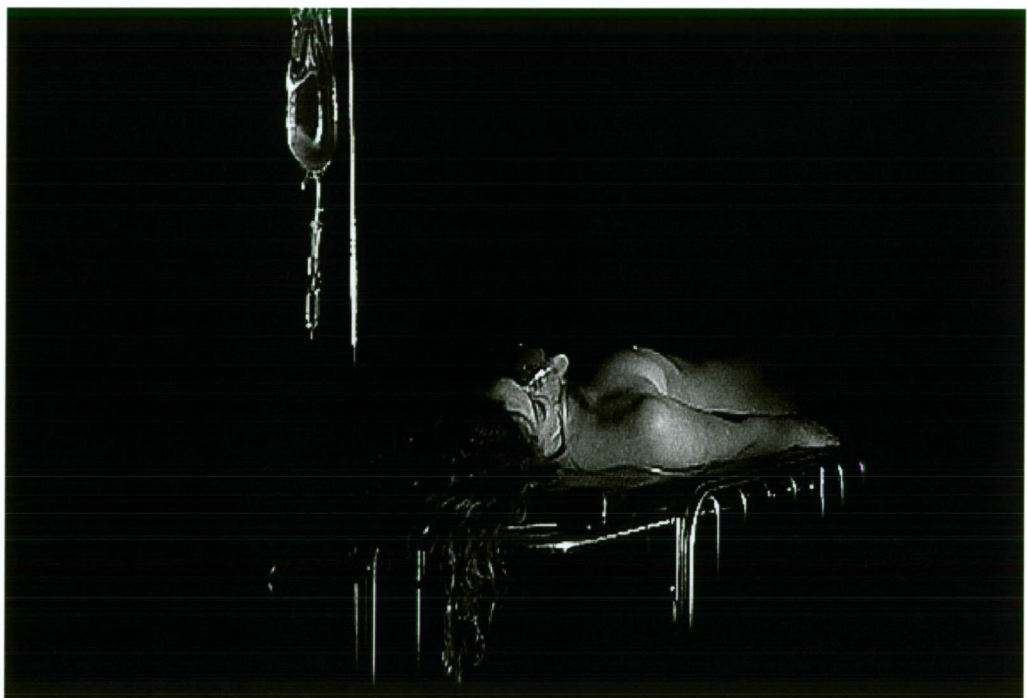


Figure 16: *Deep Sleep*, (video still), Dennis Del Favero, 2004

Memory is a driving factor in both *Parting Embrace* (1998) and *Deep Sleep* (2004). Del Favero introduces the concepts of sense memory and narrative memory. Narrative is the means by which memory is constructed on a normative basis, however the impact of a trauma that is not within the known narrative of the assaulted is initially rendered in the cognitive through sensory recording. *Deep Sleep*, a video installation, encapsulates the perhaps naive attempts to resolve the issues of traumatised patients through deep sleep therapy, revealed as a barbaric and risky process

³⁵ Jill Bennett, *Dennis Del Favero Fantasmì*, (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2004), p.67.

³⁶ Bennett, *Dennis Del Favero Fantasmì*, p.68.

through the murmurings and confusion of the subjects. If narrative is the primary means of expression, then its failure is highlighted in *Parting Embrace* which takes on the weighty subject of sexual awakening and abuse. Memory is depicted as fragmented and perhaps disguised by overwriting of the traumatic memory. The sense memory prevails.

2.3 William Kentridge

If Del Favero's work is aimed at awareness through sensory expression, then perhaps it could be argued that William Kentridge creates narrative based works with an intention of raising awareness of issues that may be forgotten. Using drawing as his main means of creating images, Kentridge has produced a number of short films which follow the development of a drawing, frame by frame. In his artist statement Kentridge says:

I have never tried to make illustrations of apartheid, but the drawings and films are certainly spawned by and feed off the brutalized society left in its wake. I am interested in a political art, that is to say an art of ambiguity, contradiction, uncompleted gestures, and certain endings; an art (and a politics) in which optimism is kept in check and nihilism at bay.³⁷

Essentially Kentridge deals with human interaction and engagement with the environment which in this case is the South African landscape and urban scene. For an outsider to South Africa, the scenes are foreign, challenging and complex, but for Kentridge they are the reality of his daily life. His stories keep the experiences that have shaped the political history of the country fresh in the eyes of the world, and at the same time increase the awareness of the very human history. His 1989 etching *Casspirs Full of Love* seems a contradiction when the visual is that of a number of heads lying in a coffin shaped, divided box. The violence of the work refers to the Casspir, "...an armoured vehicle used by security forces to quell riots and demonstrations..." but the text *Casspirs full of love* written along the length of the image, "...emerges from an utterly mundane context: state radio messages sent by families to their offspring in uniform, in one of which a parent closes her message with a cheery,

³⁷ William Kentridge, (<http://www.gregkucera.com/kentridge.htm> 2/8/2007).

'from mum, with Casspirs full of love'." ³⁸ The horror becomes the daily reality of political unrest.

In a recent Sunday Arts interview Virginia Trioli asked William Kentridge about a box of photographs that he had discovered as a child growing up in South Africa:

Well this was in 19...early-1960s, just after the Sharpeville massacre. So I would have been seven...six or seven years old. And my father was one of the lawyers involved with the inquest into the Sharpeville massacre. I went into his office one day, into his study, and saw what looked to me like a shiny yellow box, which I assumed would be Black Magic chocolates, or a dairy tray, and opened them. And instead of being this box of chocolates, it was these 8 by 10 glossy photos of all these people who'd been shot. And I'm sure that was...I mean, there are various moments when one understands the world kind of turns on its side, where everything you'd assumed you'd understood about how the world and the world of adults operates, changes. I...I obviously was shocked at the time, but didn't think about it for the next 20 or 30 years. When I was making one of my films, *Felix In Exile*, I suddenly realised that all the drawings I was doing had an echo, and it took me a while to actually place it, that it was back in that box of photographs.³⁹

Kentridge clearly outlines the somewhat subversive effects of an experience that leaves remnants of emotive responses and visual imprinting which can appear without direct acknowledgment of the source at the moment of its emergence in current artwork. Like a sleeping jolt of awareness the connections between current thought and those deeply buried in the complexity of the mind, which works to maintain self preservation, ignited for a moment and he knew where his work had a seed of imagery germinating in the brew of life.

³⁸Dan Cameron et al., *William Kentridge*, (London: Pahidon Press, 1999), p.50.

³⁹ Virginia Trioli, *Interview with William Kentridge*, Sunday Arts Transcript, <http://www.abc.net.au/tv/sundayarts/txt/s2289483.htm> , 29/6/2008.



Figure 17: *Herbaceous Border*, William Kentridge, charcoal and pastel, 121.8 x 159.6cm, 1995

In *Herbaceous Border* (1995) Kentridge invites the viewer to move into a position where the land dominates on a macro scale. Working from late nineteenth century illustrations:

Kentridge reinterprets an illustration of a white hunter and his African guide pressing through towering reeds to hunt spur-winged geese. Although he uses the same compositional layering of vegetation, water and a high, distant river bank, Kentridge's landscape is unpopulated, and he lowers the viewpoint so as to position the viewer within the swampy plants. Drawn with an energetic application of charcoal and dense black pastel, the uninviting, even sinister, landscape is made more menacing by the surveillance and communication towers visible against the oppressive sky. A tracing of red lines that punctuates the image refers to surveyors marks, recalling the damage inflicted upon the land by explorers, settlers and the mining industry, and upon its people by colonisation and its aftermath.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Beryl Hill, ed, *Prints and Drawings*, (Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria, 2003), p129.

Kentridge works with spaces (landscapes) “which are not natural or neutral”⁴¹ to produce works that remind the viewer of historical events, or events that may or may not have happened in that site. Talking about his drawing process Kentridge says, “elements of a landscape throw themselves up as appropriate and become the structure of the drawing. Pieces of a drawing lose their hold and must be removed.”⁴² This concept of working intuitively with the drawing, allowing the elements to disclose themselves as significant and erasing those that become insignificant reveals as much about the hand of the artist as it does about his subject.

Erasure is an important and distinguishing feature of Kentridge’s work, the erasure of figures, of landscape, of culture, a reflection of the politics of his country. Information is absorbed into the overwriting of the work, and memory acts in the same way, overwriting, erasing, losing distinction and becoming indistinguishable. The marks are developed with a sense of their history.

2.4 Antony Gormley

Antony Gormley has used his own body as a source of inspiration and means of producing work for 25 years. His 2007 exhibition in London united *Event Horizon* and *Blind light* as a collective of works on a huge scale. *Event Horizon* comprised of about 30 figures placed on walkways and rooftops around the Southbank Centre area. Each of the figures was placed in a way to suggest directing the gaze or the flow of people towards the Hayward Gallery where *Blind Light* and a collection of other work was on show. In contrast to many of Gormley’s installations where the figures are looking out, or filling a space, *Event Horizon* has “established the inverse of this outward looking presence, substituting a multiplicity of guardians overlooking and verifying the contents of the gallery.”⁴³

Blind Light uses the effect of light on moisture to create a space filled by opacity. Vidler writes:

⁴¹ Cameron, William Kentridge, p.111.

⁴² Cameron, William Kentridge, p.111.

⁴³ Anthony Vidler et al., *Antony Gormley Blind Light*, (Southbank Centre: Hayward Publishing, 2007) p.80.

Gormley's installation plays with psychological themes without instrumental programme; rather the sensation of losing spatial coordination (within the mist of the installation) is experienced as a positive and enriching state – one that liberates the body from its normal conditions of responding vertically, horizontally and clear boundaries.⁴⁴

This disorientation of the viewer within the installation draws on sense memory as the viewer responds according to their own life experience which surfaces as an immediate interaction. In Australia Gormley worked with the indigenous people of the community around Menzies in Western Australia to create casts of their scanned bodies. Each person's form was scaled down to create a lifelike sculpture that retained a presence of the individual yet avoids a literal representation. The sculptures are installed across Lake Ballard, a salt lake that suffers the onslaught of extreme temperatures and harsh abrasion of mineral assault. Spread across 10 kilometres the 50 figures of cast black steel appear to be actual people in the landscape despite the harshness of the salt lake conditions. "We stand not so much on the brink of the void but at the point of absorption, where consciousness merges into material, a word that has *mater* (mother) as its root." ⁴⁵

The *Inside Australia* installation draws on the natural landscape and human engagement with it to unite yet question our interaction with it. Viewing the work requires a considered approach as the conditions are harsh enough to risk life at certain times of the day and season. It is a challenge to traverse the salt lake to the furthest figure that is seven kilometres from the lake edge. This forces the viewer to consider their step, interaction and position within the installation.

2.5 Art and War

Literal depiction of the human loss during war can be displayed visually in powerful scenes from the events or as an overview through comprehension of the catastrophic results in figures. Charles Joseph

⁴⁴ Vidler, Antony Gormley *Blind Light*, p.85.

⁴⁵ Anthony Bond, in Gormley, A., *Antony Gormley Inside Australia*, (London: Thames & Hudson 2005), p.172.

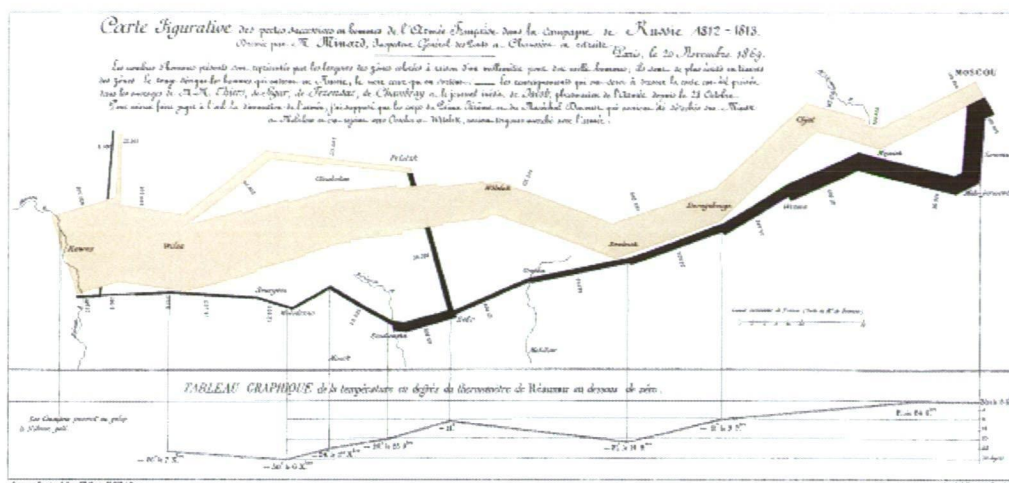


Figure18: Figurative Map, Charles Minard, 1869

Minard chose a statistical graph⁴⁶ to plot the march of Napoleons army across Russia from the Polish border to Moscow. The thick brown band that begins the march dwindles rapidly as the conflicts and conditions claim the lives of the soldiers. The return line marked in black reveals the woeful number of men who made it to the safety of the Polish border. Beginning in June 1812 with 422,000 men, the returning army had dwindled to just 10,000.⁴⁷

Interest in the visual depiction of traumatic events has carried through the documentation of human history forming a crucial understanding of the conflicts of human development. Otto Dix fought and worked during WWI. His interest in experiencing life to its heights and depths saw a keen Dix volunteer to fight for his home country of Germany in the trenches of France, Russia and Belgium. The intensely intimate etchings he produced following the end of the war were possible as he had utilised the scenarios of war to express a lived experience he documented as drawings he produced amongst the carnage, boredom and misery. Surviving serious injury on several occasions, Dix committed his post war art to producing a portfolio of 50 prints in five parts (plus one depicting the rape of a nun that was suppressed originally) titled *Der Krieg (War)* 1924.

Otto Dix offers the view of a soldier who fought and worked his art amongst the bodies of his fallen comrades, yet his depictions were not created to expose the horrors, but more to reflect on the experience that he

⁴⁶Charles Minard, (<http://www.edwardtufte.com/tufte/posters>, 1869), 24/4/2009.

⁴⁷ Edward Tufte, *Beautiful Evidence*, (Cheshire: Graphics Press, 2006), p.126.

had wanted to have, and indeed what he had enlisted for. Trauma does not operate to any particular formulae, or to our expectations.

The 51 prints from the portfolio depict the decimation of human life and the landscape with an ‘unflinching realism’ that operates on an intimate level which “...is about recapturing the nightmare-like quality of its psychological impact.”⁴⁸ The interest he had in the impact of war extended to the civilian population and powerful images of traumatised and abused women sit beside the images of soldiers in the trenches. These literal works allow the viewer to empathise with the events and human suffering of war and

develop a response to the specifics of the imagery. This is a logical and culturally cultivated expectation. The graphic detail of Dix’s prints form a counterbalance to the research for the project which explores the subliminal effects beyond an event such as the ones depicted by Dix. The project endeavours to visually present the power of the suggestion rather than the power of the imagery in a narrative sense.

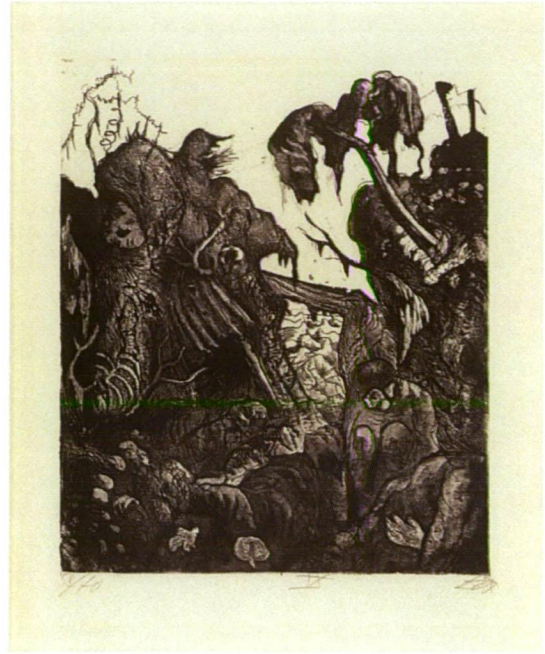


Figure 19: *Collapsed Trenches*, Otto Dix, etching, aquatint, drypoint, 1924

2.6 Summary

Each artist discussed in chapter 2 has influenced the project development through their approach to the issue of trauma or traumatic events. From the representational to the ambiguous in a range of art forms, researching their work assisted the understanding of the scale and mediums needed to address the angle that the premise of this project outlines.

⁴⁸Mark Henshaw, Otto Dix catalogue essay, (National Gallery of Australia, 2005), p.2.

Chapter 3

Revealing Scars: Navigating the Subliminal

My initial inspiration for the project, reaching into my father's history in an attempt to resolve the known and unknown aspect of my father's life and personality, became a divided quest. This resulted in several questions becoming the primary means of travelling through the venture. These questions assisted the negotiation of the physical, conceptual and emotional understanding of the environment determined by the framework of my research. They also helped to maintain a focus for each direction of study. My project was essentially of a personal nature that worked on developing a dialogue between my inner self and the outward experience of creating the work. This was progressed through observation of the natural world and encountered conversations within the timeframe of developing the work, rendering the private into the public.

3.1 Physical Expression

To begin, the self portrait was the most logical course of action. My interest in depicting the self was to develop an intimate connection between the outer skin and inner being of my body.

The development of the prints centred on the figure from the perspective of the self rather than a reflected or distanced image.

Working in lithograph, and primarily with stone lithography, the images are essentially life drawings which offer a distorted view of the self in response to the attempt to contain the psychological

scarring that is part of life, yet despite all efforts it seeps out through the body to reveal itself by the malformation of physical form.

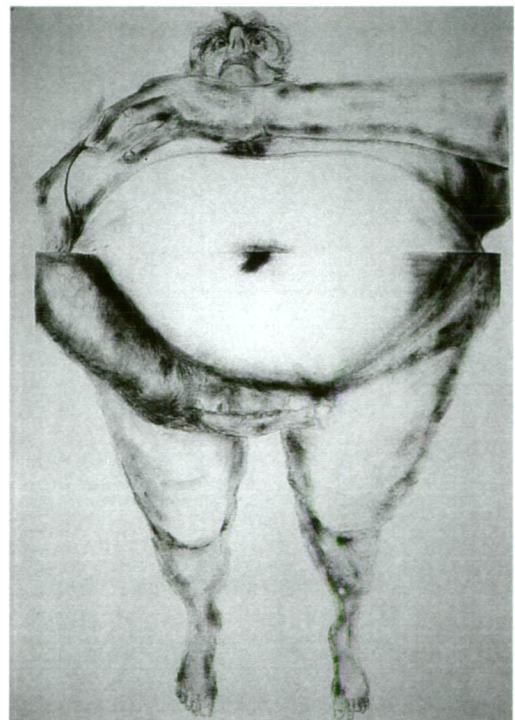


Figure 20: *Body 1*, lithograph, 76 x 56cm, 2005

The physical action of working with the lithograph stones became an intrinsic part of developing the work as the process of grinding the stones, applying the layers of marks and etches mimics the erasure, writing, rewriting and carving of emotive responses into the psyche.

The print development took the direction of exploring the concept of a symbiotic relationship between my father's work, specifically his sculptures, and my body. What emerged from my self portrait studies was the revealing of the subliminal repressed emotions becoming the relevant focus for developing images relating to the body.



Figure 21: *Body 2*, lithograph, 56 x 76cm, 2008

Question 3 led to the development of a body of work that centred on the depiction, placement and exploration of the physical body in print. Most of the prints were created using stone lithography either as partial body sections that were printed together to create a whole body image or as lower body images on their own.

As the premise for the research was to discover whether artwork accesses subliminal repressed negative emotive responses, the act of working with the knowledge of an expected or desirable outcome was in contradiction with the idea – conscious v subconscious. To approach this conflict the

images were worked in a way that denied a literal reading. The body images were usually worked on separate stones and connected on the paper, resulting in distorted and unrealistic body shapes. This process allowed the image to be distorted in a way that reflected a suggested outer appearance rather than a literal one.

The lithograph prints moved through the distorted body to images working with the lower half of the body only. This was in response to the desire to share only a portion of 'story', the rest remaining unknown, hidden. The poses were contained within the dimensions of the paper and placed in a way to suggest a preceding narrative, and a continuing narrative.

To this point, the prints existed in a suggestive space of the domestic. Without any indicators of the natural environment, the bodies seemed contained by the edges and surface of the paper. Some natural elements began to appear in the prints hinting towards a symbiotic relationship between the environment and the physical engagement with it. As the body exists by natural elements that render it into existence, the natural world is intrinsic to the physical being. The body images were developed as an expression of mutualism, adhered to the natural world.

Symbiosis was also the central element for the prints that depicted the body blended with my father's sculptures⁴⁹. There were three prints developed to a final state with this distortion. The prints combine the natural environment, the body and portions of three of the ceramic sculptures that slowly spread through the gardens of my childhood.

The human form is recognisable by specifics of an organic nature, yet the individual characteristics encompass a history of the lived experience of existence. Stone lithography⁵⁰ was the primary technique used in the development of these prints. This process involves some heavy physical labour, but with a gentle meditative quality rather than the more aggressive approach in some of the etchings. The stone is prepared by grinding the surface to a smooth finish, removing the previous image that had been etched into it. The body images in the work were created by

⁴⁹ See Appendix F

⁵⁰ See Appendix E for some images of the process

sketching and rubbing ink onto the stone which then goes through a series of etching and rolling up with ink to strengthen the image before printing.

The aim of the work was to allow the gentle process of drawing to access the subliminal layers of emotions without preconceived ideas about the mark making. The form of the image and its positioning within the frame of the paper is controlled by conscious thought and relates to specific responses in circumstance of distress and fear.

3.2 *Precipice*

Spatial reality can, for ease of discussion, be divided into external and internal realms or landscapes. The external reality is constructed with an understanding through language and sensory queues. We are trained from the moment we are born to respond to the world around us with specific information and 'knowledge' guiding our response and understanding of what are expected norms within societal structure.

Does the interior landscape have the same boundary of definition? We could view our internal realm as a storehouse where information, sensory triggers, memories, genetic code (and so the list goes on) is tucked away within the body cells to form the basis for emotive response and interpretation. *Precipice* endeavours to answer my working question 1.

Precipice is a number of prints that have been created using etching as a primary method with the inclusion of stone lithography, collograph and linocut elements. Each print is 59 x 59cm and most of the paper is BFK Rives 300gsm. The process of creating sequential prints with etching involves working the plate, the majority of the plates being copper, taking a print of that state, and then reworking the plate. This means that each state cannot be reproduced once the plate has been reworked. Due to financial restraints, I only produced one or two prints of each state to work with.

The physical act of working in print is fundamental to my research as it involves extensive physical activity, often close to the fine line of being a violent act, or the obverse with gentle and repetitive actions. The plates were initially sanded smooth to create the blank page, the surface of ground, the earth, the floor to work on. They were then coated with surface material that provides a block from the acid it would later be

etched in. The plate was then worked into using a variety of 'tools' to scratch, scrape and cut into the surface creating open areas where the acid eats at the metal in the etching stage.

Each reworking of the plate adds to or overwrites the previous state, just as the repetition of emotional distress adds to and (or) overwrites previous experiences.

The process of producing the plates contains within it a drama of production. Variables such as the strength of the acid to etch, the depth of the mark I made in the ground, the length of time the plate is etched and the way the plate is etched contribute to the unreliability of precision within the process. This allows the mark to contain an essence of intent, but also the presence of the unintentional.

The landscapes in *Precipice* are sourced from my lived experiences and chosen through conversations. The various scenes depict places of interest, places we want to be, places that offer a chance to adventure beyond the daily grind, safety of routine and bright clean surfaces. The belief that place is empty of presence draws us as individuals to seek out the calm and peace of its space. Yet removing knowledge and past experience from the present seems an implausible task.

The desert sequence offers a landscape that appears minimal in detail, yet the developing plates reveal presence of human interaction and interpretation. The ink used to create the red of the desert earth is red ochre, found in Central Australia. I ground the ochre into a fine powder and blended it with oils to create a consistency useable in lithograph and etching. Sandy earth from the desert is also used in the ink in some prints, creating a rough and tactile surface.

Presence is in the history of the ochre, the marks of the desert earth, and the forms of the natural elements. These earthy red/orange/yellow tones are strong in my memory of childhood. My father built and worked a wood fired kiln. It was always a thrill to peek through the spy hole into the glowing pots inside the belly of the kiln, and marvel at the light sandy brown of the freshly fired sculptures. Their surface was temptingly tactile to the touch of a child's soft skin and smelling faintly of heat and earth.

Preceding the *Precipice* prints are several embossed prints. These white sheets, pure from marks apart from the raised welts created by the wet paper being forced into the etched lines of the copper plate, introduce the concept of a narrative to the print sequences.

The inclusion of a suggested narrative to the work was in answer to the constant confusion created by a lack of narrative. Despite the premise of the work being based on the inability to maintain a coherent narrative in the situation of trauma, the human need to make sense of the visual world through narrative was pressing. The solution was to tie the work together with a visual construction of an interpretation of a narrative that has failed to inform in the literal manner of written language.



Figure 22: Emboss detail. 2009

The embossed paper offers only a vague image, but the tactile impression may be a dialogue or written discourse. The embossed prints are followed by a soft grey relief of the plate which increases in depth of tone, the tonality being a signifier to the increasing volume of the intensity of the narrative, the sense memory. The narrative plate also appears throughout the *Precipice* prints, surfacing and disappearing indiscriminately. The plate is worked with intaglio and relief to create altering and diffused versions of the narrative.

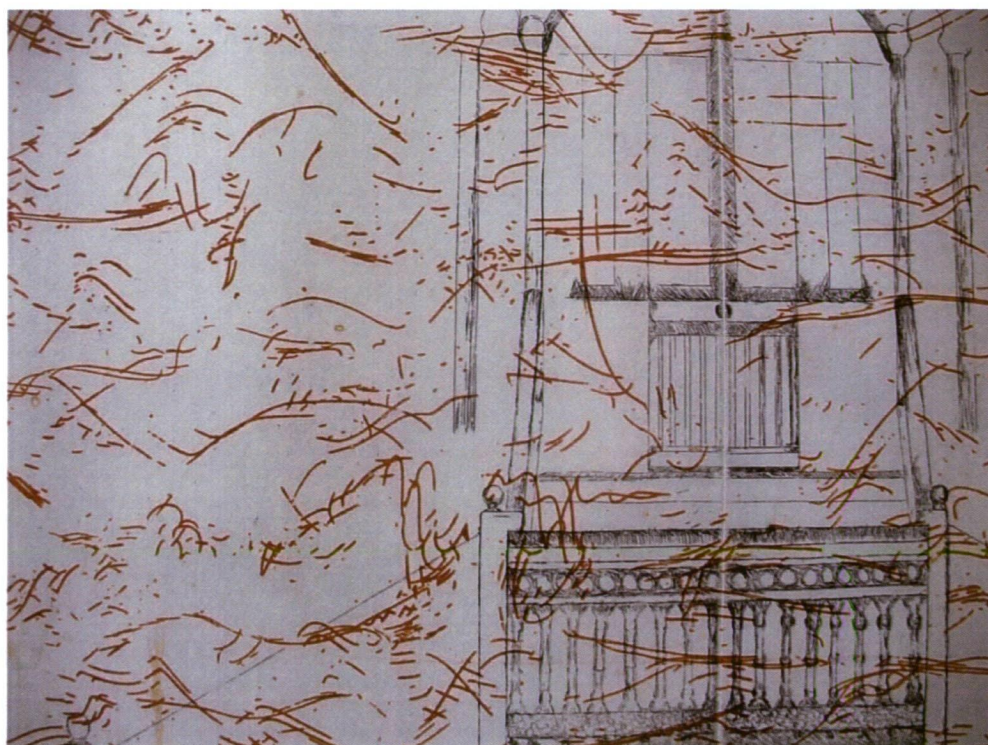


Figure 23: *Precipice* (detail), 59 x 59cm, 2009

The plate offers a distorted text, symbolic, confused, illegible, illogical, irretrievable and repeated in a known formation, yet erased or intensified through the printing processes. This reflects the very human experience of trauma, of trying to make sense of the insensible.

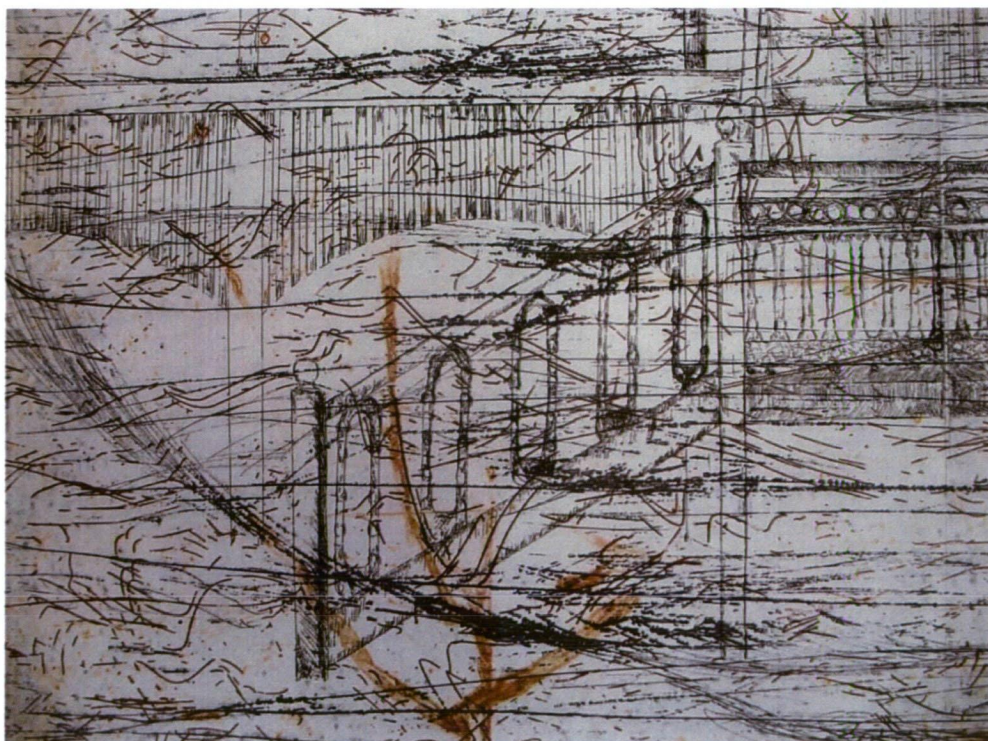


Figure 24: *Precipice* (detail), 59 x 59cm, 2009

The subliminal repressed thoughts surface like a random subterranean bubble of hot water, bursting into the cool stream. Disrupting the surface skin, dispersing, blending, diluting, yet forever altering the place it appears. *Precipice* flows through life's experiences, appearing and disappearing with varying intensity and resembling a distorted film strip that offers only a few glimpses of the whole and just a hint of the sub terrain. The subtext then becomes an important element in the prints.

Association with the human form is relevant in the work as it refers to the interaction between people throughout life. Trauma may be inflicted by another person or it may be shared by more than one person. Trauma may be associated with being with people or the absence of a person or people. We tie our lives in a normal social sense to the communication between people and the many facets of those interactions. The human presence then, is an important element on the work.

The shadow image that appears in the *Precipice* prints was sourced from photographs I took of my own shadow on a significant day in my family life.

The figure is stretched, deformed and manipulated in the prints in lithograph and aquatint etching. The shadow offers a presence that denies a literal reading of the human form. There is no detail of the body beyond an outline and it offers no identifying or historical markers. The figure is ambiguous and can be either gender or any age. This ensures that detail of the shadow is fulfilled by the viewers own transactive engagement.

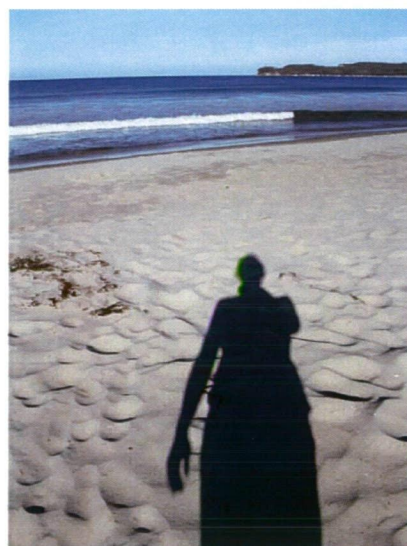


Figure 25: Shadow photograph, 2007

In the house sequence of prints the shadows are less formalised. Scattered shadowy areas and marks refer to a scattered history that becomes the dominant form of the right hand side of the house. The left hand side of the house develops to become the vision of suburban lifestyle, unaware of the other half of the house. In a literal sense, this refers to the dividing of the old Queenslander houses into separate flats. The shadows grow and eventually envelop the half house, offering barely a glimmer of relief. The

shadows in the desert sequence of the prints form the surface earth, growing in stature and eventually filling the print. They cross as they grow, creating a scattered field of marks that become imbedded as the ground, the surface, the skin. The shadow disappears under the upper layers of the print as the density of the image increases, thus increasing the confusion, noise and darkness of the work. Found ochre is prominent in the working of these prints, formed into an ink by grinding it with binders.



Figure 26: *Precipice* (detail), 59 x 59cm, 2009



Figure 27: *Precipice* (detail), 59 x 59cm, 2009

In the forest sequence of prints the figure has the most recognisable form. The shadow forms appear in the print at a developed state and quickly dissipate into the forest.

Collectively these impressions of human presence pull the work into a discourse that encompasses the psychological and physical engagement of man with the built and natural environment. The literal memory that may be associated with a person is replaced by the ghost image, the detail erased to leave just a trace presence.



Figure 28: *Precipice* (detail), 59 x 59cm, 2009

The colours used in this project were drawn directly from the environments encountered which sits alongside the use of the hand developed inks that was an important connection between my father's practices as a potter as he dug his own clay and created his own glazes. The soft brown of the timber in the old Queenslander house moves into a rich red orange glow; the colour of burning skies, flaming hearts and fear rippling through the domestic scene. The right side of the house deteriorates with the inclusion of creeping dark areas that seep into the structure while the left side continues to flourish and remain detached. Sepia was used to create a sense of history, while the red is a build up of yellow and red ochre given a translucent glow.

Similarly the desert prints have colours that are drawn directly from the experience. The red and yellow ochre are stronger, increasing in tonal

impact through the print development. Some of these prints also have the red sand of the desert blended into the ink in parts, increasing the tactile connection between the earth and the human experience it holds within it. The prints close in with dark black, tightening around the ochre glow and blocking the clarity of interpretation or perception.

The forest prints feature the deceptive Payne's grey in tones from blue to black. The touches of colour are merely offering moments of respite. Dipping to black, they dissolve the definition and comfortable interpretation possible in the early states.

3.3 *Beneath the Skin*

The presence of ceramics in my work, through the sound installation and unfired tiles, was a result of continuing to pursue the connection between my research and my father's pottery and sculpture practice. Taking adult education classes in pottery throughout the period of my study, I was able to maintain the initial inspiration for my project⁵¹. Despite working on several projects with fired ceramics to create a piece that expressed the relevance of this connection, my final work was a collection of raw clay tiles.



Figure 29: Family photograph, Buderim

Created using white stoneware clay, the tiles form an installation that covers the floor according to the space allocated. 90 tiles were created to work with for the final submission.

⁵¹ See Appendix B for some images of ceramics created during this process.



Figure 30: *Beneath the Skin*, working photograph, 2009

The embossed image of a linocut of monsterio leaves was pressed onto the raw clay. The tiles were shaped in haphazard arcs and covered a portion of the floor in the exhibit. Prior to opening the exhibition, I walked across some of the tiles, breaking their form and leaving the shards as they had crumbled. The monsterio plant was a significant part of our family backyard, growing to a huge size climbing the jacaranda tree and producing an abundance of fruit. The sculptural shape of the leaves formed a dense cover that hid the ground, plants and children's dreams under their glossy dark surface. By transferring their image to the clay I am alluding to the experience of the plant transformed into the seemingly impenetrable density of the clay.

Moving around the space the viewer experiences the audio of clay tiles breaking in combination with the broken tiles in the gallery space. The release of sound stimulates a comprehension, thought or connective moment between the physical presence of the clay and the illusive sounds. The moment of release resonates from within and connects the external sound and visual that stimulates the expression of an internal state of awareness to the external.

Beneath the skin approaches the relationship between father and daughter cautiously, discretely. The use of repetition in the clay tiles refers to the continual resurfacing of issues that lay beneath the image. Yet the broken, shattered tiles offer only an indistinct remnant that exposes little. Shadows, lights and darks move across the surface of the tiles, suggesting the shadow self as a dark passenger carrying what has gone before and moving through the installation.



Figure 31: *Beneath the Skin*, working photograph, 2009

Sound has been a significant interest in my research. The physiology that guides the interpretation of sound varies for individuals⁵². Forming pathways of sense memory, sound can intensify a present experience. Sound stimulates response constantly in a subliminal and conscious way. The triggers can be in response to physical or psychological stimulation with a full range of degree of response. Loud music, perhaps Beethoven for example, may allow one person to meld into their own thoughts and provide a place for contemplation beyond the expectations of daily life, while for another it sparks emotions and physical discomfort. Sound

⁵² See notes on physiology in Appendix C

stimulates memory, and sound recognition is associated with narrative identification⁵³.

3.4 Summary

Chapter 3 has discussed the details of the work that comprises the examination exhibition and part of the work that forms the support for the practical aspects of the research. Despite there being a considerable amount of work that didn't become part of the final submission, this work has been crucial in the development of the technical refinement of the project and honing of the premise that guides the research.

Installation became an important aspect of the work as creating the right atmosphere for viewing the work was crucial. Lighting, room size, wall composition and volume of the sound recording are all significant elements in the work. More images of the primary work can be seen as part of the appendix.⁵⁴

There were a number of works that were completed and played a role of exploring ideas and directions. These works are important as they inform the primary exhibition works with a path that lead to the completion of the work. These can be seen as part of the appendices.⁵⁵

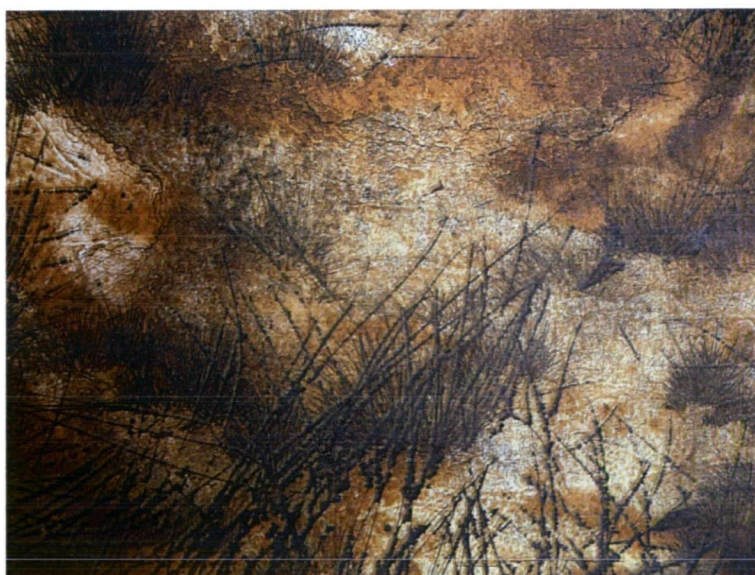


Figure 32: *Precipice* (detail)

⁵³ See Appendix D for notes on sound by Berkley and Chelle Macnaughtan

⁵⁴ See Appendix G

⁵⁵ See Appendix F, images of further work

Chapter 4

Conclusion

Revealing Scars is artwork that does not try to describe any particular place, despite the use of landscape and domestic structure as a visual vehicle for the premise. The printmaking developed through the extensive working and reworking of the plates with the combination of lithography and etching as a primary technical challenge. This was achieved to its best effect during the project in *Precipice*. The act of building up the plates through repeated etching moved beyond what may be perceived as a finished image to be erased or obfuscated by continual etching and layering of the image. The experience gained developing these prints over the period of time the MFA took to complete has formed a strong work practice for future print development.

I became aware of the performative nature of the project upon reflection of the processes used in the construction of the print, the resolution of the ceramic work through *Beneath the Skin* and the installation of *Precipice* in the Plimsoll Gallery. While there was no intent upon the outset of developing this artwork to expose or include my presence within it, the prints and tiles stand as a resolution of a personal journey, and my physical presence is beyond it.

As the work developed, the question of how to present the prints began to formulate. The elements that needed to be addressed in the installation included memory, time, narrative and the sense stimulation. Working with the *Precipice* sequence initially, I photographed the work and printed small images of each print which I could then manipulate easily to test various layouts and combinations of the prints. This process revealed that as I had worked with as little intention as possible, putting the work together was always going to be a challenge. The sequence moves from the domestic space to the open landscape then becomes enclosed in the forest. Resolving the artwork required the development of two plates which were then worked over a number of the prints. The 'subtext', represented by a layer of marks that move aggressively across the print, is the narrative that is not necessarily coherent, consistent, or even based in reality. The 'narrative', represented by a layer of unreadable marks, is

carried through the prints with varying intensity and clarity and forms a bridge between the varying sites. This flow indicated that the most effective way to read the work was in a linear fashion that associates with reading the written word.

The works were mounted onto painted boards hung individually on the gallery wall. While working with the installation of the prints, I noticed that my eye tended to rest on four of the prints at once and this became the way that I reworked the hanging of the prints to create a sequence that held the elements within the visual frame. *Precipice* grew to a sequence of 84 prints that when placed in a single line reaches nearly 50 metres in length.

Installation became primary in the resolution of the work through the placement of the prints with consideration of the tonal highlights in reference to the recurring nature of traumatic memories. The installation of the gallery work was further enhanced with accentuated lighting.

The distinction between being a painter, printmaker, sculptor perhaps, or being someone who works in portraiture or landscape is a tool of the art critic or historian and not of being human or of being an artist. The portrait, or depiction of the human form, is as present in a landscape as conversely the landscape is present within the human form. The elements are intrinsically intertwined and inextricable. Forming a critical eye to distinguish qualities enable the viewer to determine an opinion or sense of understanding; however this critical eye does not negate the existence of the elements that are not distinguished by an individual eye.

It is this perhaps subversive element, the aspects of the art that are disguised and frequently included unbeknown to the mind of the artist that has drawn me to complete a Master of Fine Art in printmaking. Ultimately the projects that were most successful were the most difficult to extract from the hand and mind as it required a disconnection from the knowledge of the premise of the project – a distancing from the emotive grasp of history, relationships and stories.

Following the completion of the artwork and installation in the Plimsoll Gallery for the examination exhibition, it seems pertinent to revisit the premise of the project in retrospect. The installation of the two works

submitted in the gallery was always intended to be a crucial part of the project. Therefore assessing the degree of success in concluding the project was therefore problematic prior to the installation and examination process.

The work *Precipice* was the primary response to the first question posed "Through the process of plate sequence and tonal direction in printmaking, can creative expression expose subliminal emotionally disturbing experiences of life without direct or literal acknowledgment?" The proposition of the work exposing subliminal repressed emotions was answered for me on a personal basis during the installation process. This involved grouping and sorting the 84 prints into a single work that had coherence yet expressed the subversive nature of experience that carries with an individual through life. The prints revealed more than I had ever imagined that they would. This was reinforced by the questions and conversations about the work which were either directly asked or discussed between visitors to the exhibition. The subversive nature of the work became a subversive conversation.

This draws back to the two plates I used to link and carry a suggestion of a conversation - loud at times, whispered at other moments or hidden from view. This connective tissue echoed the external expression of the internal landscape.

Beneath the Skin was the second work installed in the Plimsoll Gallery for examination and was the result of pursuing the second question "Can you create a space that stimulates a response which draws on a sense memory to empathise with unsolicited emotionally disturbing encounters without reference to any specific event?" this work stemmed directly from my personal relationship with my father who was a potter in the 60's, 70's and 80's in Queensland.

The resolution of this installation revealed a depth of emotion for me that I could not have anticipated prior to installing the piece. I am still at a loss as to why I was moved to tears as I completed the installation. Was it the tactile nature of working with the familiar material of the clay, being such a strong association with my father? Perhaps the act of breaking the tiles and destroying the hours of work that went into creating the tiles in just minutes which was enhanced by the echoing sound piece that

accompanied the work, triggered the despair of a relationship broken by time and distance.

Perhaps, in spite of it all, we really don't need to know.

Assessing the success or failure of the artwork in response to a specific line of questioning can only offer the subjective view of the artist. So with this in mind, I feel that I can put to rest the urgency and intensity of creative desire that drove the investigation of this project, and in saying this, one can draw a conclusion from the inner calm I now carry within me.

Appendix A

Selected Entries from my father's diaries he kept during his experience as a prisoner of war for one and half years in Italy and one and half years in Germany.

Prior to departure from England

Thursday 5, February, 1942

Saw Unfinished Business
"with" Green Garson of
"Blossoms in the Dust" fame.
Still as low we are all the
same, all came on the draft
full of spirit but that is now
replaced by a "lets have leave
or go abroad" feeling. this
inaction is bad for us all. and
conditions are not good for a
long stay here.



Figure 33: John Langdon, WWII POW, Italy

Libyan Desert

16.5.1942

...the fact of living, eating and washing in sand is as natural as it should be. I am well settled in now with the help of my pal we have built ourselves a dug out today the dust and wind having got the better of us, it was hell living in the open while it was blowing trying to keep self and kit free from sand really an impossibility.

27.5.42

Yesterday I was taken off my phone duty unfortunately and am now digging with three specialists in a new position, today we started again but jerry started his threatened push so that has ceased, at the moment I am in my bivvy listening to my first experience of a large amount of shelling fortunately our own as yet. Yesterday had some outstanding news in that a man shot himself through his mouth, but all that is forgotten in the new interest it

seems to be a pretty good do and promises some excitement for me that is what I feel at the moment, I have a little urge to see jerry but that is more than likely through ignorance of such contact.

Rommel

There is some Italian writing in my father's first journal (FANTE MARIANNINI GUIDO 1942) by the hand of a soldier who took the journal from my father following his capture. The journal was later recovered from the Italian soldier by an American soldier and eventually – about a year later – and was delivered to my father in the Italian POW camp. *I cry every time I read this.* My father continues with a new journal, a collection of paper with graph lines in faded blue, and recalls the events of his capture.

1st June 1942

Having gone rear of the guns we stopped but not for long, I was told to open wireless and my officer went into a carrier, a captain came with me and I found that my truck and the carrier were to be OP's with the tank formation for smoke screens to protect them. Each OP had to gun under orders all that were left of the regiment. The tanks moved, we followed, noise, dust, nerves taught, it was an experience, we kept in with the tanks moving slowly. Getting under fire I had to send down - lrd smoke 15.00 all ok – a little further – lrd smoke 14.50 all ok – and the officer did not give another order, he was hit by A.T.K and the driver swung the truck out of the battle and headed rear. We luckily hit F.A.P. and unloaded the officer. He was totally hit and died in an hour. I gave two more fire orders down under the second in command and then closed down. Before doing so I heard the other OP go dead so they had been hit, later I learnt with no casualties. Now the battle was fierce in the morning sunrise. I could see the tanks slowly retreating towards where I was, in a slit trench with the driver of my truck. Shelling was the worst I had experienced and from the battle was a continuous hail of small arms fire. The next I knew our truck was being destroyed with all the rest in the area and it was a disheartening sight to see all going up in flames and add parties of men making their way back to where they did not know shelled

and machine gunned all at once. After a while we decided that we ought to run and started with two officers who branched off on their own, others joined us and bullets and shells flying did not make me feel very comfortable as I ran for the ridge and comparative safety. I got over alright after dropping down a lot and leaving my overcoat as it made such a clear target. With all the rest I went on passing silent guns destroyed by themselves, trucks gear everywhere all abandoned the meaning so impressed on our minds. I walked some way to a party in the gap of the minefield where I filled my bottle and with the gin in it from our truck it put new life into me. I walked on with a fellow I knew and saw some trucks in the distance getting near. The fellows in front put up their hands, so we followed suit, it was Italians and we were searched there and passed on to the outside of the minefield where they lined us up until there were a good many and then commenced to march.

Prisoner Of War

7th Wednesday October 1942

Breakfast this morning was fried tomatoes in cheese and toast the Ity coffee is very much improved by milk and sugar in the mornings now helping my early meal very much, it comes up around seven and it is surprisingly cold until the sun gets up, we all lie in bed and let the carriers bring it to us a good idea it is too...

Friday 28th 1943

Bulk issue. salt issue. canteen milk & matches. S.C.R. 4 ½ lire credit. spring onions.

My turn to brew today Sid woke me I nearly went to sleep again for I had a really good night no journeys & a sound sleep. The fatigue yesterday, it shows. What a little exercise can do for us...

12.3.45 (About)

I feel like most of the lager just now, the end is near & all I must do is look after myself in respect of my life, due credit to the bombers, until the day finally arrives for which I have so long waited. News

is excellent it raises hopes until patience with the bounds of the daily existence is broken & one falls into acute despondency – ‘deeply browned off’ & weary with futile activity, yes futile it is, nothing but a continual effort to avoid work which still furthers the war, thereby furthering our infernal captivity. Daily, of the whole number working only half, at the most, remain at their work all day – the sentries are useless, hanging and lifeless they hang on to the few remaining men, wearily following them as the sirens dictate or whims & wills desire. Discipline exists only in the high ranks & the police force although even in the latter – the ordinary ranks are doubtful, if I have not before seen war-weariness I am daily seeing it now, lifeless, pale faces, with a deep look in the eyes certain of the future fate but waiting with a despondent hopelessness for it to arrive, the “innerman” has not been satisfied & is becoming more & more like the “outerman” as hungry war days go by. This week & next I am free from the latter burden but after that I drift slowly towards its inevitable hold – but – the one all important difference is that I have hope, ‘No, a surety’, that my future is assured, my most primitive instinct, fear, is at rest, I can see only safety & security for the future years of my life – free of military suppression, one way of expressing the rule of nature that the strongest & fittest wins, whether that means by individual or by number or by any other form of power in the World today. I am in a front line now but one I do not like, one side is waving a white flag & the other wielding a red one but the white one is not ‘backed’, unsupported it will wave until it is dyed red with blood, its own, not mine.

Appendix B



Figure 34: ceramic development image



Figure 35: ceramic development image



Figure 36: ceramic development image

Appendix C

It would seem remiss of me not to include some brief introduction to the physiological characteristics of a person that enable information to be processed by the mind. Factors of difference between the effectiveness of body parts, and specifically those which serve the purpose of providing sensory information is quite an important consideration for the understanding of a person's trauma. An example could be the difference between a person who is colour blind, to a person who has excellent colour perception. Both people may experience the same traumatic event in quite a different way.

Through the concept of visual language, art as therapy is mentioned through the practices of psychology and philosophy. Utilising art therapy as a means of communicating with grief stricken and shocked people has been a successful practice for social workers in many extreme circumstances around the world. The following entries are intended to offer a small suggestion of factors that influence the outcome of a fearful event and support the process of my project development and argument. It is not intended to represent a thorough investigation of philosophical argument or study in psychology⁵⁶.

Vision

The visual system is quite a complex process of interpreting images and energy (light). The eye collects the information and brings it to focus on the retina which is made up of rod and cone shaped cells. The structure of the eye, with the cornea encasing the pupil, iris, lens and fluids, affects the ability of the person to interpret the visual information. The ability to adapt to degrees of darkness, determine spatial information, distinguish colour as well as the brightness, saturation and hue if colour, and the depth of field are all powerful influences as to how a person interprets their environment. Add to the variations that are a matter of physical structure the existence of the blind spot (where the information gathers on the surface of the retina) and the fallible nature of vision to be tricked by optical illusions and confidence in our visual system may falter.

⁵⁶ Walker, M, Burnham, D & Borland R, *Psychology 2nd Edition*, (Milton: John Wiley & Sons, 1994) p150- 182.

Auditory

The auditory system has three subdivisions of the outer, middle and inner ear. Sound waves pass through the auditory canal to the eardrum which sits in front of the cochlea that converts the mechanical energy of the sound to electrochemical energy for the brain to interpret. Damage to the cochlea, with the super sensitive hair cells that respond to the vibrations and send the messages to the brain, is quite common in a period of time when human activity produces noise levels of all kinds in the extreme. Again the physical ability of the auditory system is reliant upon precision and lack of damage for accurate interpretation of the environment the person is in.

Memory

Theories about how memory works are abundant; however there are some consistencies to the process. The sensory memory is made up of visual and auditory input which is probably determined by the attention that we give to it. This is because there is such a vast amount of sensory information around us at any given time that to process all the information would be improbable. The sensory information is passed to the short term memory which holds it for an undetermined amount of time. This information is our thinking or conscious part of the process but the capacity is quite small so some information is forwarded on to long term memory. The selection of information for long term storage seems to be associated with rehearsal of the information which prioritises specifics. This suggest that only information that is given conscious attention will be stored, however the ability to recall information that you were unaware of at the time rejects the simplistic theory of defined boundaries between the processes of memory. Memory, it seems, is a fuzzy affair!

Appendix D

Berkley (1685 - 1753) debates the weighty issue of perception in *Three Dialogues Between Hylas And Philonous*, published when he was 28 (Honderich, T., 1995, p89). He writes of the senses and the development of thought which interprets the sensory perception thus (*in* Dowe, P. 1998 pp. 89 – 90),

...though I grant we may, in one acceptation, be said to perceive sensible things mediately by sense: that is, when, from a frequently perceived connexion, the immediate perception of ideas by one sense *suggests* to the mind others, perhaps belonging to another sense, which are wont to be connected with them. For instance, when I hear a coach drive along the streets, immediately I perceive only the sound; but, from the experience I have had that such a sound is connected with the coach, I am said to hear the coach. It is nevertheless evident that, in truth and strictness, nothing can be *heard but sound*; and the coach is not then properly perceived by sense, but suggested from experience.

Chelle Macnaughtan is an architect who has been researching the connection between sound and architecture. In one exhibition she has used printmaking, and specifically etching, as a medium, to develop her theory of transferability. In an abstract Macnaughtan writes:

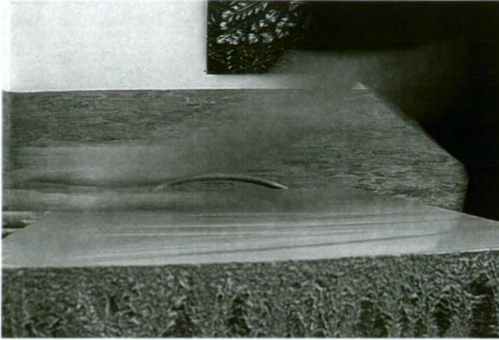
...Cage's {(music and visual artist, John Cage)} work has consequences for all creative disciplines, and the spatial nature of his work lends itself to transferability. This transferability is being contextualised through testing the processes of experimentation in which both Cage and also Libeskind's {(music and architect Daniel Libeskind)} work might be understood as spatial figures rather than singularly as music or architecture.

Her installation, *Space in the Sound of Architecture* filled the Uber gallery in Melbourne. Nine plates lined one wall, and prints formed three lines, each plate printed three times with increasing pigment from white to dark. A recording of the artist walking through the Jewish Museum introduced the literal sound to the space. "In the sequence, the biggest shock was the jump from the first print, which was embossed paper – a

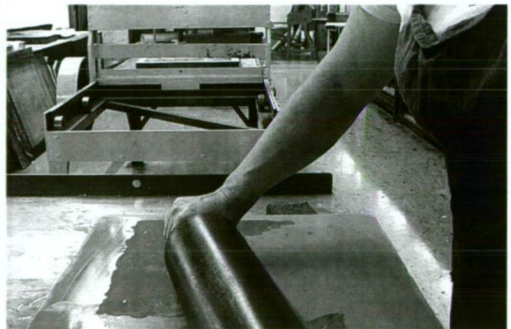
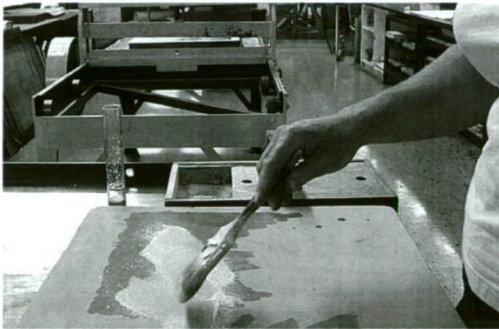
pure signal – to the next print, which was the first to carry the noise of the ink” (Selenitsch, A.) and as the ink became stronger in the sequence, the noise of the print increased.

Appendix E

Images of the stone lithography process.



The surface of the limestone is ground smooth to remove the old image. After a new image is drawn or marked onto the stone, it goes through a process of etching that requires the application of rosin, talc and mix of acid and gum.



The image has the ink rolled onto it, the ink catching on the slightly raised surface of the etched stone.

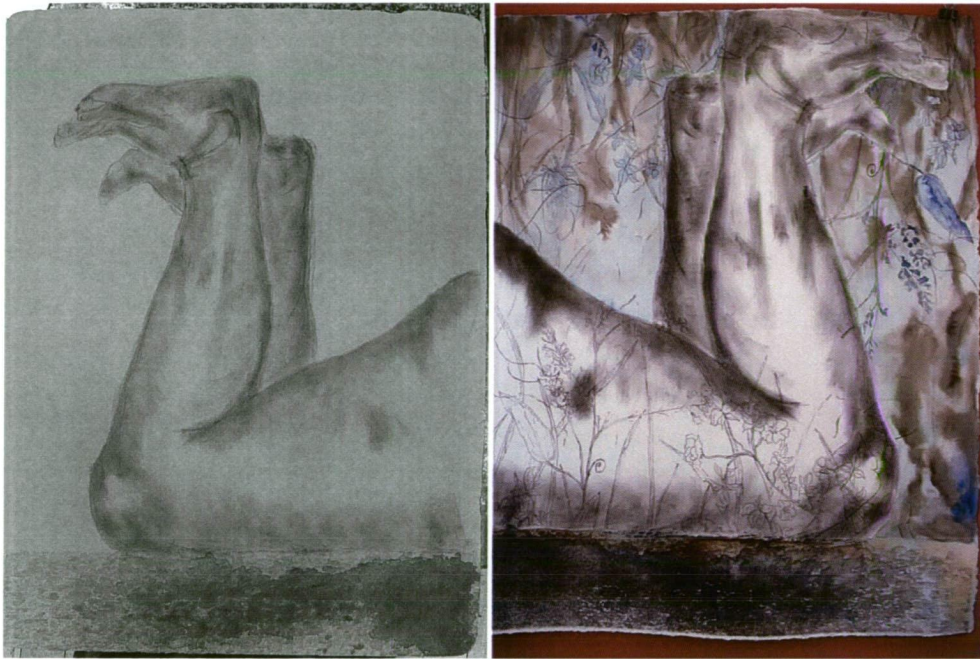
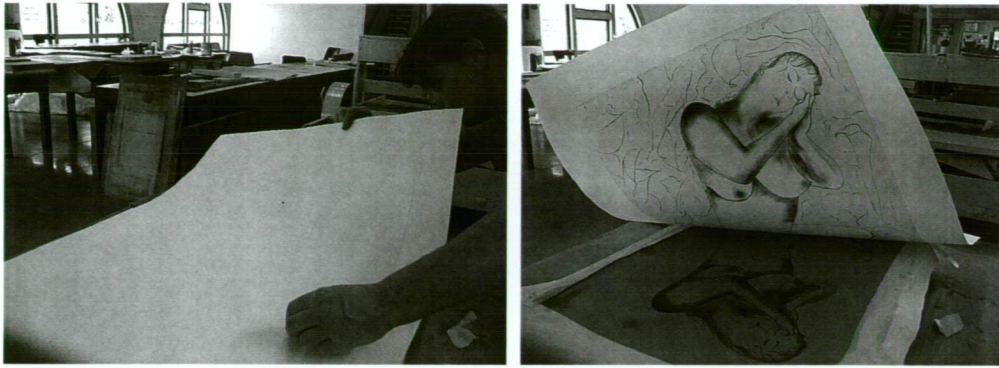


Figure 37 – 46: Stone lithography process

The stone is printed with the paper on top which sometimes requires pinhole registration. The image on the stone is the reverse of the image that is printed.

Appendix F

Further Work

The two works, 'bullet; passed by' and 'casuarina whispers' directly engage with sensory interpretation and response. Drawing from the literal experience of sound, being a gentle whispering of wind through the leaves of the Casuarina and the piercing whistle of a bullet passing by (which you may hear before the explosive shot from the gun that fired it) are at the opposite ends of intensity. This is represented in the prints through colour, the dark apparent calm of the black in 'casuarina whispers' and the vibrant alert of red in 'bullet; passed by'.

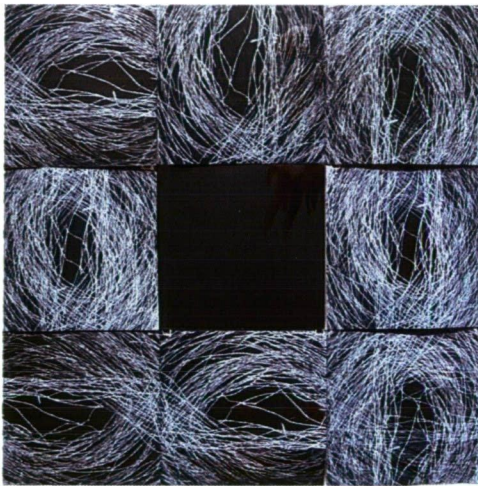


Figure 47: *Casuarina Whispers*, etching, 2006

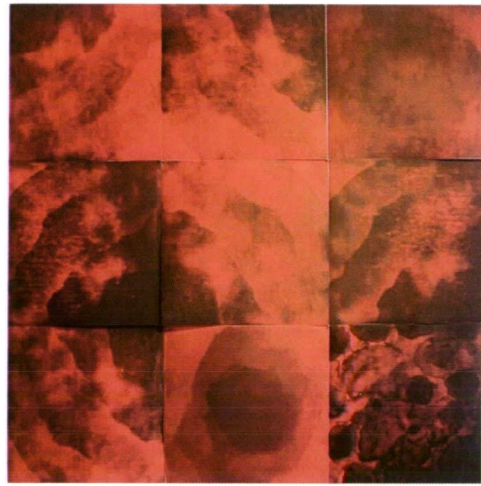


Figure 48: *Bullet; passed by*, lithograph, etching, 2007

Working with text was an important part of the research process. The thousands of words in my father's diaries resonate with a story of seemingly endless routine with the underlying tension of hope that the war would end and liberation from the monotony of prison camp life would swiftly follow. The most successful work with text was the silk strip that was printed with an etching and sewn together with red thread and hair. This aspect of the project needs a considerable amount of time to render into a work that satisfies the demands of the content and there was insufficient time during this project to complete it.

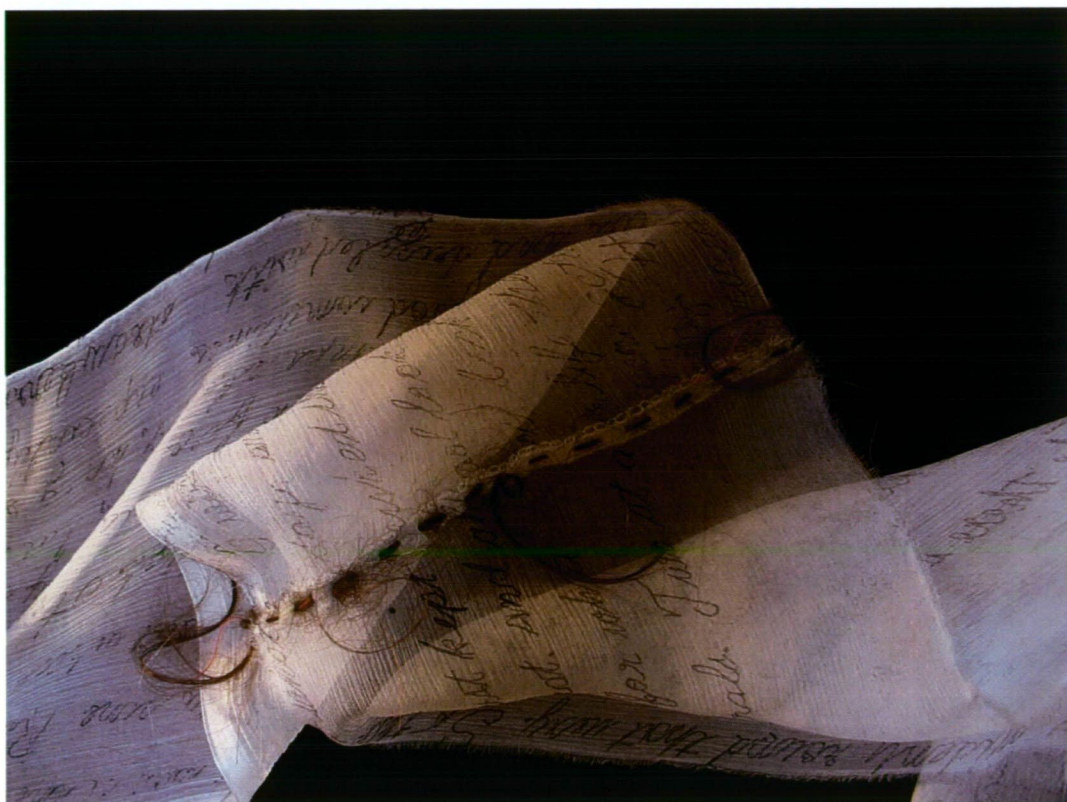


Figure 49: Silk, etching, hair, red thread (detail) unresolved work, 2007

There are three prints that refer to my father's sculptures on a direct basis. The lithograph bodies are morphed with his sculptures to suggest a bonding between the unwritten tension of the work and childhood development that carries through life. Each lithograph is accompanied with an etching and hand colouring with watercolour paint.

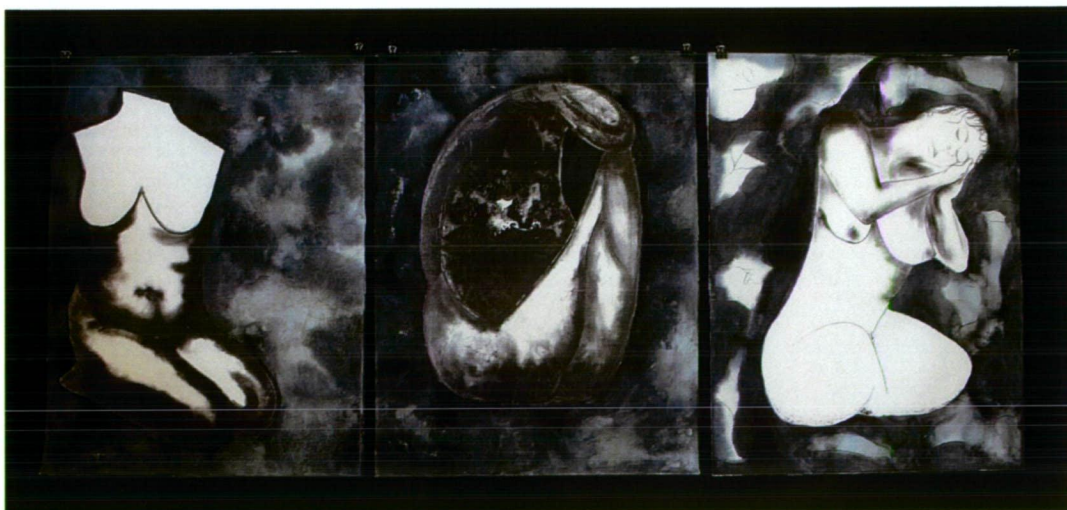


Figure 50: *Sculpted*, lithograph, etching, watercolour, 2008

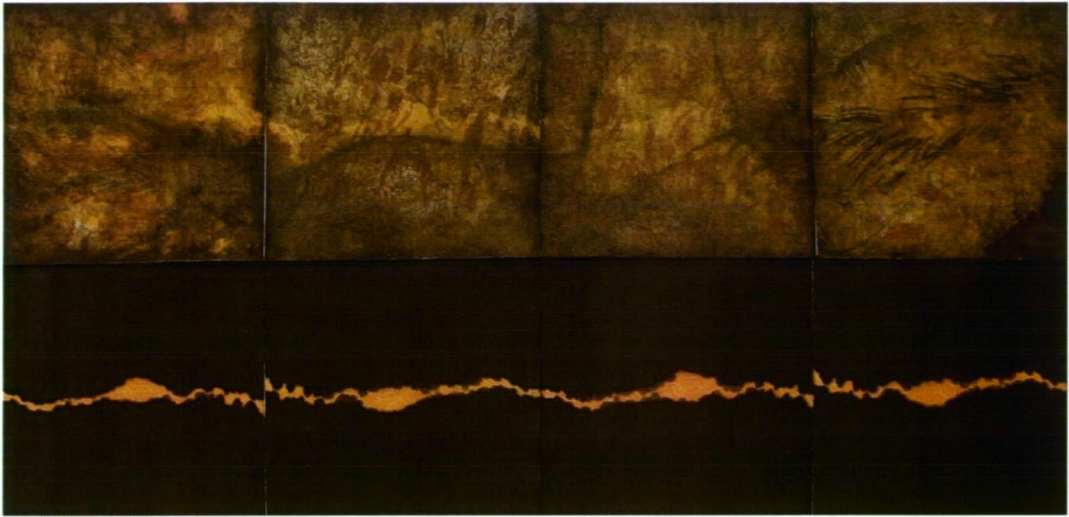


Figure 51: *Roam*, etching, 2009



Figure 52: *Roam* (detail) 2009

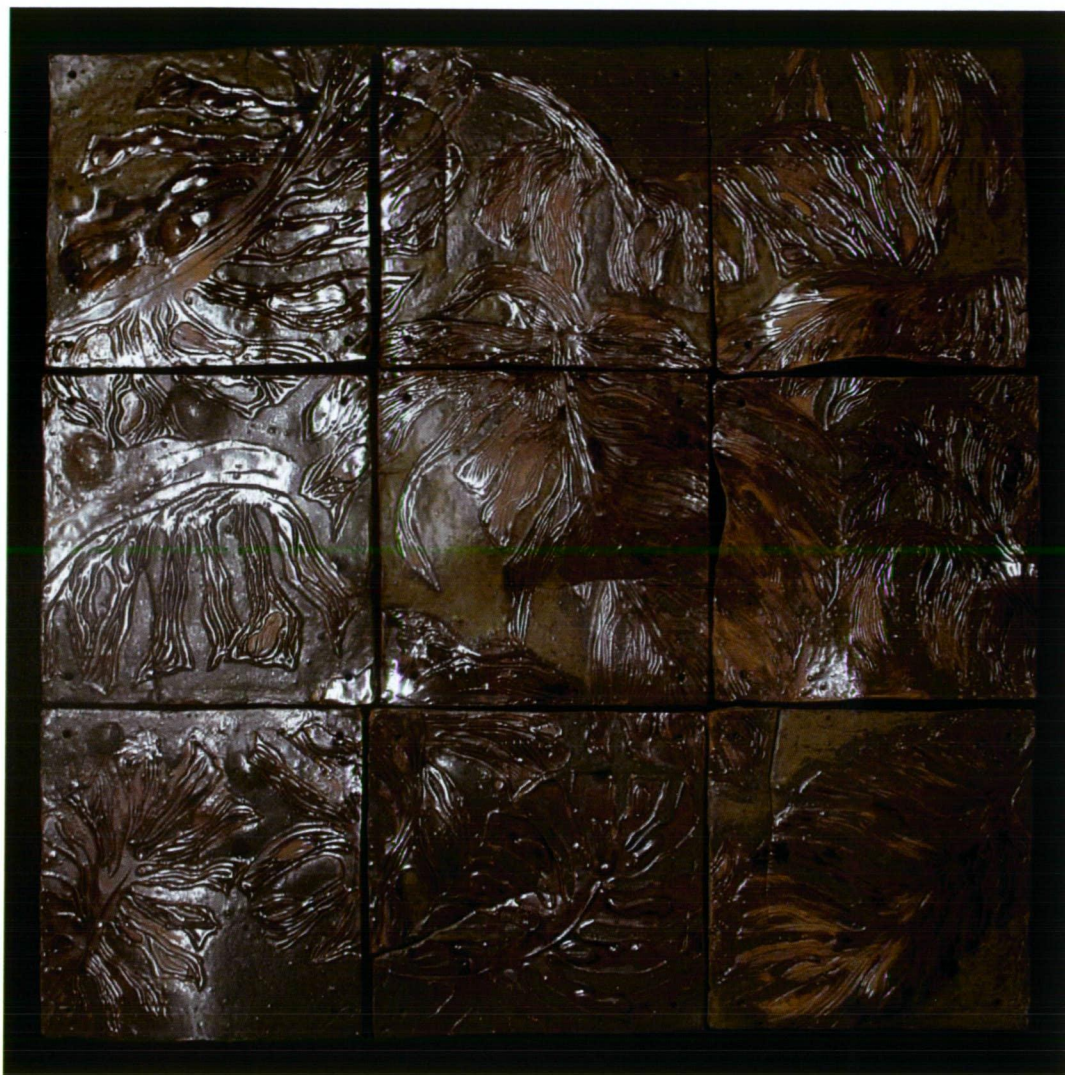
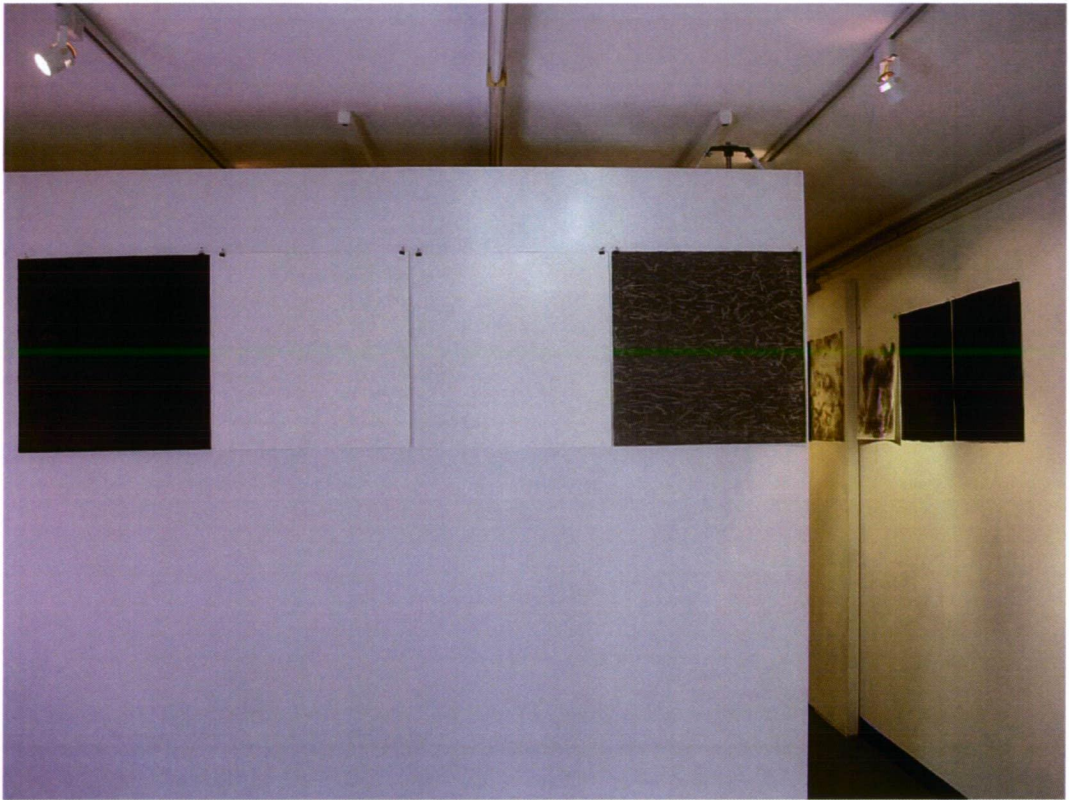


Figure 53: *Beneath the Skin*, fired ceramic tile version, 2009

Appendix G

Images of primary work





Figures 54- 56: *Precipice*, testing the installation, 2009



Figure 57: *Beneath the Skin*, trial work, 2009

Appendix H

A glossary of printmaking terms used in this project

Aquatint

An etching technique that creates areas of tone through the use of powdered resin that is sprinkled on the etching plate prior to being bitten by the etching acid. An alternative to rosin is the use of spray paint. The result is a finely textured tonal area whose darkness is determined by how long the plate is bitten by the acid.

Drypoint

Similar to etching, but the lines are simply scratched into the plate manually, without the use of acid. The hallmark of a drypoint is a soft and often rather thick or bushy line somewhat like that of an ink pen on moist paper.

Etching

A means of incising lines in a metal plate with acid for printing in the intaglio technique. The plate is first covered with an acid resistant ground through which the artist scratches a design with a stylus or needle, revealing the bare metal below. This plate is then immersed in an acid bath that cuts the incised lines into the plate. Etched lines often betray the subtle motions of the artist's fingertips.

Hard Ground

The plate is covered with an acid resistant surface and offers a means to create line etching. This can be as fine as the artist determines.

Intaglio

Any of the techniques in which an image or tonal area is printed from lines or textures scratched or etched into a metal plate (engraving, etching, drypoint, aquatint, lift ground, soft ground). The plate is covered with ink, then wiped clean leaving ink in the incised lines or textures of the image. This plate is then printed in a press on moistened paper. The paper is

forced down into the area of the plate holding ink, and the image is transferred to the paper.

Linoleum Cut

A relief print carved into linoleum rather than wood.

Lithograph

A printing technique in which the image is drawn on a very flat slab of limestone (or a specially treated metal plate). This stone is treated chemically so that ink, when rolled on to the stone, adheres only where the drawing was done. This inked image can then be transferred to a piece of paper with the help of a high pressure press.

Relief Print

Any print in which the image is printed from the raised portions of a carved, etched, or cast block. A simple example would be a rubber stamp. The most common relief prints are woodcuts. The term "relief print" is used when it is not clear which kind of relief printing has been used (photomechanical or hand carved, for example).

Screen Print

A form of stencil printing in which the stencil is adhered to a fine screen for support. Ink can be squeegeed through the screen onto paper. Screen printing can have a hard edged quality caused by the crisp edges of the stencil. Also referred to as "silk screen" and "serigraphy."

Soft ground

An etching technique in which the plate is covered with malleable ground through which a variety textures can be pressed, allowing them to be etched into the plate. For example, a piece of paper laid on top of a soft grounded plate can be drawn upon with a pencil, and the resulting etched image will resemble a pencil line drawn on paper.

Sugar Lift

A form of intaglio printing in which the artists draws with a specially formulated ink on a metal plate. The plate is then covered with an acid resistant ground and immersed in water. The characteristics of the

drawing medium (which may be applied with a pen or brush) allow it to dissolve and work through the acid resistant ground. When bitten in acid, the final result resembles pen or brush work.

Woodcut

A relief print usually carved in the plank grain of a piece of wood. After the relief image has been carved in the plank with knives or gouges it is inked with a dauber or roller. It can then be printed by hand (in which case a sheet of paper is laid down on the inked plank and rubbed from the back with a smooth surface such as the palm of the hand or a wooden spoon) or with the help of a mechanical press.

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